







*THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY*  
*OF*  
*ENGLISH LITERATURE*



*VOLUME I*

*THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES*

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CAMBRIDGE HISTORY  
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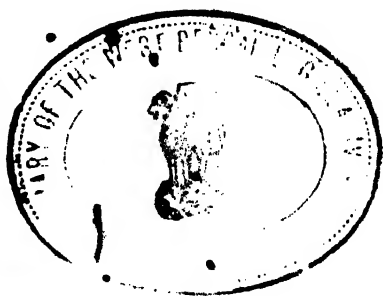
W. WARD, Litt.D., F.B.A., Master of Peterhouse

AND

A. R. WALLER, M.A., Peterhouse

VOLUME I

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES



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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE editors of *The Cambridge History of English Literature* are glad to find by the welcome extended to their first volume that the work apparently goes some way towards meeting the needs of those for whose use it was undertaken. They are very sensible of the kindness of those critics who have pointed out where it was thought that improvements could be made; and, in several cases, they have been able to avail themselves of these suggestions. The editors are especially pleased to find that the purpose of the short editorial sections included in the text has been generally understood, and that the notes attached to the bibliographies have been found to be useful.

Simultaneously with the printing of the second volume, it has been found necessary to prepare a second impression of the first; and advantage has been taken of this occasion to correct a few misprints and errors and to add one or two notes. In order that purchasers of the first impression may not be placed at any disadvantage in this respect, a printed slip, setting forth corrections of importance that have been made in the first volume, is inserted in all copies of the second volume.

Pressure of material, and the desire to consult the convenience of students, have prevented the editor from dealing in the present volume with the beginnings of the English drama. The chapters concerned with the early religious plays have been transferred to the earlier of the two volumes which will deal consecutively with the general history of the English drama from its beginnings to the closing of the theatres under the Puritan régime. It is not necessary to remind the student that, in any collective estimate of the English literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with which the present volume is chiefly

concerned, the miracle plays must be regarded as of the greatest importance.

The third volume, *Renascence and Reformation*, is in the press. It deals with Erasmus and More, Barclay and Skelton, Lindsay and Knox; with the poetry (other than dramatic) as well as the prose of the earlier Tudor age; and it contains chapters, in sequence to those in volume I, concerning changes in language and prosody to the days of Elizabeth. The editors hope that it may be in their power to publish this third volume before the close of the present year; should they find it impossible to accomplish this task, they desire that the blame may be imputed not to the contributing authors, whose aid throughout has been generous and ungrudging, but to editorial difficulties, into the details of which it would be wearisome to enter here.

A. W. W.

A. R. W.

CAMBRIDGE.

20 March 1896.

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## CHAPTER I

### PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND ITS SEQUENCE

Few poems of the Middle Ages have had a stranger fate than those grouped under the general title of *The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman*. Obviously very popular in the latter half of the fourteenth century, the time of their composition, they remained popular throughout the fifteenth century, were regarded in the sixteenth by the leaders of the reformation as an inspiration and a prophecy, and, in modern times, have been quoted by every historian of the fourteenth century as the most vivid and trustworthy source for the social and economic history of the time. Yet their early popularity has resulted in the confusion of what is really the work of five different men, and in the creation of a mythical author of all these poems and one other; and the nature of the interest of the sixteenth century reformers has caused a misunderstanding of the objects and aims of the satire contained in the poems separately and collectively. Worst of all, perhaps, the failure of modern scholars to distinguish the presence of several hands in the poems has resulted in a general charge of vagueness and obscurity, which has not even spared a portion of the work remarkable for its clearness and definiteness and structural excellence.

Before taking up any of the problems just suggested, we may recall briefly certain undisputed facts as to the form of the poems. They are written throughout in alliterative verse of the same general type as that of *Beowulf* and other Old English poems, and, at first sight, seem to form one long poem, extant in versions differing somewhat from one another. As Skeat has conclusively shown in his monumental editions of the texts, there are three principal versions or texts, which he designates the A-text, the B-text and the C-text, or the Vernon, the Crowley and the Whitaker versions respectively. The A-text, or Vernon version, consists of three visions supposed to come to the author while

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sleeping beside a stream among the Malvern hills. The first of these, occupying the prologue and passus I—IV, is the vision of the field full of folk—a symbol of the world—and Holy Church and Lady Meed; the second, occupying passus V—VIII, is the vision of Piers the Plowman and the crowd of penitents whom he leads in search of Saint Truth; the third, occupying passus IX—XII, is a vision in which the dreamer goes in search of Do-well, Do-better and Do-best, but is attacked by hunger and fever and dies ere his quest is accomplished. The B-text and the C-text are successive modifications and expansions of the A-text.

Let us turn now from fact to theory. The two principal authorities, Skeat and Jusserand, though differing in details, agree, in the main, in the account they give of the poems and the author; and their account is very generally accepted. It is as follows. The author was William Langland (or Langley), born about 1331—2 at Cleobury Mortimer, 32 miles S.S.E. from Shrewsbury and 137 N.W. from London, and educated in the school of the Benedictine monastery at Malvern, among the hills S.W. of Worcester. Whether he was the son of freemen (Skeat's view) or of serfs (Jusserand's view), he was, at any rate, educated for the church and probably took minor orders; but, because of his temperament, his opinions, his marriage, or his lack of influential friends, he never rose in the church. At some unknown date, possibly before 1362, he removed to London and made a scanty living by singing masses, copying legal documents and other similar casual occupations. In 1362, he began his famous poems, writing first the vision of Lady Meed and the vision of Piers the Plowman. Perhaps immediately, perhaps after an interval of some time, he added to these the vision of Do-well, Do-better and Do-best. This first version of these poems constitutes what is now called the A-text of *Piers the Plowman*. But, according to the current view, the author did not leave matters thus. Encouraged by the success of his work and impelled by his increasing indignation at the corruptions of the age, he took up his poem again in 1377 and expanded it to more than twice its original length. The lines of the earlier version he left essentially unchanged; but he inserted, here and there, additions of greater or less length, suggested now by some word or phrase of the original text, now by events in the world about him and his meditations on them; and he rejected the whole of the final passus, containing an imaginary account of his death, to replace it by a continuation of the vision of Do-well, Do-better and Do-best longer than the whole of the original version of the poem. The

A-text had contained a prologue and four passus (or cantos) of the vision of Lady Meed, four passus of the vision of Piers the Plowman and four passus of the vision of Do-well, Do-better and Do-best, or twelve passus in all, with a total of 2567 lines. The B-text runs parallel to this to the end of passus XI (but with 3206 lines instead of 2467), and then continues for nine more passus, making a total of 7242 lines. The author's active interest in his poem did not cease here, however, for he subjected it to another revision, about 1393 (according to Skeat) or 1398 (according to Jusserand). This revision is known as the C-text. Its relation to the B-text may be roughly stated as consisting in the insertion of a few passages, the rearrangement of a considerable number and the rewriting of a number of others with more or less change of content or of emphasis, but, on the whole, as involving no such striking differences from the B-text as exist between that and the A-text. This latest version numbers 7357 lines as against the 7242 of the second version.

Skeat and Jusserand ascribe to the same author another poem in alliterative verse, commonly known as *Richard the Redeless*, concerning the last years of the reign of Richard II. This poem, which, as we have it, is a fragment, was, Skeat thinks, written between the capture and the formal deposition of Richard in 1399, and was, perhaps, left unfinished by the author in consequence of the fate of the king.

The evidence relied upon to prove that all these poems were the work of a single author is entirely the internal evidence of the poems themselves, supposed similarity in ideas, style, diction, etc., together with the difficulty of supposing the existence, at, approximately, the same time, of several unknown writers of such ability as is displayed in these poems. Undoubtedly, the first impulse of any student of a group of poems related as these are is to assume that they are the work of a single author, and that any statements made in the poems concerning the personality and experiences of the dreamer are autobiographical revelations. Moreover, in this particular case, it will be remembered, each of the two later versions incorporates with its additions the preceding version; and, as the C-text, on account of the larger mass of material in it, has received the almost exclusive attention of scholars, the impression of the style and other literary qualities gained by the modern student has, necessarily, been a composite of the qualities of the three texts and not a distinct sense of the qualities of each and the differences between them.

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Such differences do exist, and in the greatest number and variety. There are differences in diction, in metre, in sentence structure, in methods of organising material, in number and kind of rhetorical devices; in power of visualising objects and scenes presented, in topics of interest to the author and in views on social, theological and various miscellaneous questions. Some of these have, indeed, been observed and discussed by previous writers, but they have always been explained as due to such changes as might occur in any man's mental qualities and views of life in the course of thirty or thirty-five years, the interval between the earliest and the latest version. To the present writer the differences seem of such a nature as not to admit of such an explanation; and this opinion is confirmed by the existence of certain passages in which the authors of the later versions have failed to understand their predecessors.

This is, of course, not the place for polemics or for a detailed examination of all the problems suggested by the poems. Our principal concern is with the poems themselves as literary monuments and, if it may be, with their author or authors. But, for this very reason, it seems necessary to present the poems in such a way as to enable the student to decide for himself between the two theories of authorship, inasmuch as this decision carries with it important conclusions concerning the literary values of the poems, the mental qualities of the authors and the intellectual activity of the age to which they belong. Fortunately, such a presentation is precisely that which will best set forth the contents of the poems and their qualities.

Let us examine first the prologue and pastus I-VIII of the A-text. This is not an arbitrary dismemberment of a poem. The two visions included in these passus are intimately connected with each other and definitely separated from what follows. At the beginning of the prologue the dreamer goes to sleep among the Malvern hills and sees a vision of the world in the guise of a field full of folk thronging a valley bounded on one side by a cliff, on which stands the tower of Truth, and, on the other, by a deep dale, in which, surrounded by a dark moat, lies the dungeon of Wrong. Within this valley begin the incidents of his first vision, and, though they range far, there is never any suggestion of discontinuity; at the end of the vision the dreamer wakes for only a moment, and, immediately falling asleep, sees again the same field of folk and another series of events unfolding themselves in rapid succession beneath the cliff with its high-built tower, until,

finally, he wakes 'meatless and moneyless in Malvern hills.' The third vision, on the other hand, has no connection with Malvern hills; the dreamer sees nothing of his valley, with the folk and the tower and the dungeon; indeed, this is not a vision at all in the sense of the first two, but, rather, a series of dream-visits and dream-discussions, the like of which cannot be found in the first two visions. Skeat himself has recognised the close connection between the first two visions, and has suggested that the third may have been written after a considerable interval.

Each of the first two visions in the A-text is, contrary to the usual opinion, distinguished by remarkable unity of structure, directness of movement and freedom from digression of any sort. The author marshals his dream-figures with marvellous swiftness, but with unerring hand; he never himself forgets for a moment the relation of any incident to his whole plan, nor allows his reader to forget it, or to feel at a loss as to its meaning or its place.

We first see, with the vividness of the dreamer's own vision, the thronging crowd in the valley beneath the tower of Truth and hovering on the brink of the dark dale. People of all sorts are there—the poor and the rich, saints and sinners of every variety, living as they live in the world. Singly and in groups they pass before us, each noted by the poet with a word or a phrase that gives us their very form and pressure. Satire there is, but it is satire which does not impede the movement of the thronged dream, satire which flashes and plays about the object, revealing its inner nature by a word, an epithet, a brief phrase. We see the false beggars shamming for food and fighting at the ale-house, 'great lubbers and long that loth were to labour'; the friars, 'preaching the people for profit of their bellies'; the pardoner, surrounded by the crowd of ignorant believers, whom he deceives with his papal bull and his fair speech; and the corrupt priest, taking his share of the ill-gotten gains, while the bishop, who is not 'worth his two ears,' refuses to interfere. Then come a hundred lawyers in hoods of silk, ready to undertake any cause for money, but refusing 'to unloose their lips once for love of our Lord'; 'you could more easily,' says the poet, 'measure the mist on Malvern hills than get a mum of their mouths unless money were showed.' After them appears a confused throng of churchmen of all degrees, all 'leaping to London' to seek worldly offices and wealth. Wasters there are, and idle labourers 'that do their deeds ill and drive forth the long day with singing *Dieu save Dame Emme!*' Along with the satire there is commendation, now for the ploughmen who

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work hard and play seldom; now, of a higher sort; for pious nuns and hermits; now, for honest merchants; now, even for harmless minstrels who 'get gold with their glee.' But, neither satire nor commendation delays even for a moment our rapid survey of this marvellous motley crowd, or detracts from our feeling that, in this valley of vision, the world in miniature is visibly moving, living, working, cheating, praying, singing, crying for sale its 'hot pies,' its 'good geese and pigs,' its 'white wine and red.'

The author, having thus, in his prologue, set before us the vision first presented to the eyes of his mind, proceeds to interpret it. This he does characteristically by a further development of the dream itself.

A lovely lady comes down from the cliff and says to the dreamer:

Son, seest thou this people, how engrossed they are in this confusion? The most part of the people that pass now on earth, if they have success in this world, care for nothing else; of other heaven than here they take no account.

The impression already made upon us by this strange majestic figure is deepened by the author's vivid comment, 'I was afeard of her face, fair though she was, and said, "Mercy, my lady; what is the meaning of this?"' The tower, she explains, is the dwelling of Truth, the Father of our faith, who formed us all and commanded the earth to serve mankind with all things needful. He has given food and drink and clothing to suffice for all, but to be used with moderation, for excess is sinful and dangerous to the soul. The dreamer enquires curiously about money; 'the money on this earth that men so fast hold, tell me to whom that treasure belongs.' 'Go to the Gospel,' she replies, 'and consider what Christ himself said when the people apposed him with a penny.' He then asks the meaning of the dungeon in the deep dale.

That is the castle of Care; whose comes therein may ban that he was born to body or to soul; in it dwells a wight named Wrong, the father of False, who seduced Adam and Cain and Judas. He is a hinderer of love, and deceives all who trust in their vain treasures.

Wondering who she is that utters such wisdom, the dreamer is informed that she is Holy Church. 'Thou oughtest to know me; I received thee first and taught thee faith, and thou didst promise to love me loyally while thy life should endure.' He falls upon his knees, beseeching her favour and begging her to teach him so to believe on Christ as to do His will: 'Teach me to no treasure but tell me this, how I may save my soul!'

‘When all treasure is tried,’ she declares, ‘Truth is the best; it is as precious as God himself. Whoso is true of his tongue and of his deeds, and does ill to no man, is accounted to the Gospel and likened to our Lord. Truth is claimed by Christian and non-Christian; it should be kept by all. Kings and knights are bound by it, cherubim and seraphim and all the orders of angels were knighted by Christ and taught to know Truth. Lucifer and his fellows failed in obedience, and sinned by pride, and fell; but all who keep Truth may be sure that their souls shall go to heaven to be crowned by Truth; for, when all treasure is tried, Truth is the best.’ ‘But what is it? By what quality or power of my nature does it begin, and where?’ ‘Thou fool, it is a teaching of nature to love thy Lord dearer than thyself, and do no deadly sin though thou shouldst die. This is Truth, and none can teach thee better; it is the most precious thing demanded by our Lord. Love began by the Father and was perfected in the death of his Son. Be merciful as He was merciful, for, unless you live truly, and love and help the poor, you have no merit in Mass or in Hours. Faith without works is dead; chastity without charity is as foul as an unlighted lamp. *Date et dabitur vobis*, this is the lock of love that lets out my grace to comfort all sinful; it is the readiest way that leads to heaven.’

With this Holy Church declares that she can stay no longer, and passus I closes.

But the dreamer kneels and beseeches her, crying,

‘Mercy, my lady, for the love of her that bore the blissful Babe that redeemed us on the cross; teach me to know False!’ ‘Look on thy left hand and see where he stands—both False and Favel (Duplicity) and all his whole house.’ I looked on the left hand as the lady taught me; and I saw a woman wonderfully clothed, arrayed in furs the richest on earth, crowned with a crown no less costly than the king’s, all her five fingers loaded with rings, with the most precious stones that prince ever wore. ‘Who is this woman,’ said I, ‘thus richly attired?’ ‘That is the maiden Meed, who has often injured me. To-morrow will the marriage be made of her and False. Favel brought them together, Guile prepared her for it and Liar has directed the whole affair. I warn thee that thou mayst know them all, and keep thyself from them, if thou desirest to dwell with Truth in his bliss. I can stay no longer; I commit thee to our Lord.’

All the rich retinue that held with False was bidden to the bridal. Simony was sent for to seal the charters and feoff Meed with all the possessions of False and Favel. But there was no house that could hold the throng that came. In a moment, as if by some magical process, we see a pavilion pitched on a hill, with ten thousand tents set about it, for all men of all orders to witness the feoffment of Meed. Then Favel brought her forth, and Simony and Civil (Civil Law) stood forth and unfolded the charter, which was drawn up in due legal form and endowed the contracting parties with all the provisos of the seven deadly sins, ‘to have and to hold, and all their heirs after, with the appurtenance of Purgatory, even to the torment of Hell; yielding, for this thing, at the year’s end, their souls to Satan.’ This was duly witnessed

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and delivered. But Theology objected to the wedding, because Meed was no bastard and should be wedded according to the choice of Truth.

The workman is worthy of his hire. False is no mate for her; she is of good birth and might kiss the king for cousin. Take her to London and see if the law will permit this wedding; and beware, for Truth is wise, and Conscience, who knows you all, is of his counsel.

Civil agreed, but Simony demanded money for his services. Then Favel brought forth gold, and began to bribe officers and witnesses; and all promised to go to London and support his claims before the court at Westminster.

The incident which follows is one of the best examples of the author's power of visualisation and of rapid narration unbroken by explanation or moralisation; for the moralising lines, unfortunately admitted into Skeat's text, which interrupt the narrative and tend to delay and obscure it, do not belong to the original, but are found in one MS only. To the rapidity and assurance with which the picture is developed is, perhaps, due in no small part the readiness with which we accept it and the vitality and solidity which these personified abstractions maintain throughout the dream.

'Then they lacked horses to carry them thither, but Favel brought forth foals of the best. He set Meed on a sheriff's back, shod all new, and False on a jurror that trotted softly.' In like manner for each of the abstractions was provided some appropriate, concrete evil-doer; and, thus equipped, the fantastic crew immediately set out. But Sophyness saw them well, and said little, but rode hard and came first to court. There he told Conscience, and Conscience reported to the king, all that had happened. 'Now, by Christ,' said the king, 'if I might catch False or any of his fellows, I would hang them by the neck.' Dread, standing at the door, heard his doom, and went wightly to warn False. At the news, the wedding party fled in all directions. False fled to the friars, Liar leaped away lightly, lurked through lanes, buffeted by many and ordered to leave, until pardoners had pity on him and received him as one of themselves. Then he was in demand: physicians and merchants and minstrels and messengers wanted him; but the friars induced him to come with them. Of the whole wedding party, only Meed durst stay, and she trembled and wept and wrung her hands when she was arrested.

In passus III the king orders that Meed shall be treated courteously, and declares that he himself will ask her whom she

wishes to wed, and, if she acts reasonably, he will forgive her. So a clerk brought her to the chamber. At once people began to profess friendship for her and promise aid. The justices came, and said, 'Mourn not, Meed; we will clear thee.' She thanked them and gave them cups of clean gold and rings with rubies. Clerks came, and said, 'We are thine own, to work thy will while life lasts.' She promised to reward them all: 'no ignorance shall hinder the advancement of him whom I love.' A confessor offered to shrive her for a 'seam of wheat and to serve her in any evil. She told him a tale and gave him money to be her bedesman and her bawd. He assoiled her, and then suggested that, if she would help them with a stained glass window they were putting in, her name would be recorded on it and her soul would be sure of heaven. 'Knew I that,' said the woman, 'there is neither window nor altar that I would not make or mend, and inscribe my name thereon.' Here the author declares the sin of such actions, and exhorts men to cease such inscriptions, and give alms. He also urges mayors to punish brewers, bakers, butchers and cooks, who, of all men on earth, do most harm by defrauding the poor. 'Meed,' he remarks, 'urged them to take bribes and permit such cheating; but Solomon says that fire shall consume the houses of those who take bribes.'

Then the king entered and had Meed brought before him. He addressed her courteously, but said, 'Never hast thou done worse than now, but do so no more. I have a knight called Conscience; wilt thou marry him?' 'Yea, lord,' said the lady, 'God forbid else!' Conscience was called and asked if he would wed her.

Nay, Christ forbid! She is frail of her flesh, fickle, a causer of wantonness. She killed father Adam and has poisoned popes. She is as common as the cart-way; she releases the guilty and hangs the innocent. She is privy with the pope, and she and Simony seal his bulls. She maintains priests in concubinage. She leads the law as she pleases, and suppresses the complaints of the poor.

Meed tried to defend herself by charging that Conscience had caused greater evils. He had killed a king. He had caused a king to give up his campaign in Normandy.

Had I been the king's marshal, he should have been lord of all that land. A king ought to give rewards to all that serve him; popes both receive and give rewards; servants receive wages; beggars, alms; the king pays his officers; priests expect mass-pence; craftsmen and merchants, all take meed.

The king was impressed by this plea, and cried, 'By Christ, Meed is worthy to have such mastery.' But Conscience kneeled,

and explained that there are two kinds of meed; the one, such as God gives to men who love him; the other, such as maintains evil-doers. 'Such as take bribes shall answer for it; priests that take money for masses have their reward on earth only. Wages is not meed, nor is there meed in the bargains of merchants.' He then illustrates the dangers of meed by the story of Saul and the Amalekites, and ends by declaring that Reason shall reign and govern realms; Meed shall no more be master, but Love and Humility and Loyalty shall rule, and Kind-Wit and Conscience together shall make Law a labourer, such love shall arise.

The king interrupted him and tried to effect a reconciliation between him and Meed, but Conscience refused, unless advised thereto by Reason. 'Ride forth and fetch Reason; he shall rule my realm,' replied the king. Conscience rode away gladly and returned with Reason, followed by Wit and Wisdom. The king welcomed Reason, and set him on the throne, between himself and his son; and, while they were talking together, Peace came, and put up a bill how Wrong had taken his wife, had stolen his geese, his pigs, his horse and his wheat, had murdered his men and beaten him. Wrong was afraid and tried to bribe Wisdom to plead for him. Wisdom and Wit told him that, without the help of Meed, he was ruined, and they took him to her. Peace showed the king his bloody head; and the king and Conscience knew he had been wronged; but Wisdom offered bail for Wrong and payment of the damages, and Meed offered Peace a present of gold; whereupon Peace begged the king to have mercy upon Wrong. The king swore he would not. Some urged Reason to have pity, but he declared that he would not

till all lords and ladies love truth, and men cease to spoil children, and clerks and knights are courteous, and priests practise what they preach, till the custom of pilgrimages and of carrying money out of the land ceases, till Meed has no might to moot in this hall. Were I king, no wrong should go unpunished or get grace by bribes. Were this rule kept, Law would have to become a labourer, and Love should rule all.

When they heard this, all held Reason a master and Meed a wretch. Love laughed Meed to scorn. The king agreed that Reason spoke truth, but said it would be hard to establish such government. Reason asserted that it would be easy. Whereupon the king begged Reason to stay with him and rule the land as long as he lived. 'I am ready,' said Reason, 'to rest with thee ever; provided Conscience be our counsellor, I care for nothing better.' 'Gladly,' said the king; 'God forbid that he fail; and, as long as I live, let us keep together!'

Thus ends *passus* IV, and, with it, the first vision. The style and the method of composition are, in the highest degree, worthy of *gotte*. The author, it will be observed, sets forth his views, not, after the ordinary fashion of allegorists, by bringing together his personifications and using them as mere mouthpieces, but by involving them in a rapidly moving series of interesting situations, skilfully devised to cause each to act and speak in a thoroughly characteristic manner. They do not seem to be puppets, moving and speaking as the showman pulls the strings, but persons, endowed each with his own life and moved by the impulses of his own will. Only once or twice does the author interrupt his narration to express his own views or feelings, and never does he allow them to interfere with the skill or sincerity of expression of the *dramatis personae*. His presentation has, indeed, the clear, undisturbed objectivity of excellent drama, or of life itself.

. In the prologue, the satire, as has been observed, is all incidental, casual; the same is true of *passus* I; for these two sections of the poem are not essentially satirical. The first is a purely objective vision of the world with its mingled good and evil; the second is the explanation of this vision with some comment and exhortation by Holy Church, the interpreter. The satire proper begins with *passus* II, and, from there to the end of this vision, is devoted to a single subject—Meed and the confusion and distress which, because of her, afflict the world. Friars, merchants, the clergy, justices, lawyers, all classes of men, indeed, are shown to be corrupted by love of Meed; but, contrary to current opinion, there is nowhere even the least hint of any personal animosity against any class of men as a class, or against any of the established institutions of church or state. The friars have often been supposed to be the special object of attack, but, so far as this vision is concerned, they fare better, on the whole, than do the lawyers. The only notable order of fourteenth century society that escapes censure altogether is that of the monks. Of them there is no direct criticism, though some of the MSS include monks among those to whom Meed is common (III, 127—8). The possible bearing of this fact upon the social status of the author will be discussed later.

As to the style, no summary or paraphrase can reproduce its picturesqueness and *verve*. It is always simple, direct, evocative of a constant series of clear and sharply-defined images of individuals and groups. Little or no attempt is made at elaborate, or even ordinarily full, description, and colour-words are singularly

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few; but it would be difficult to find a piece of writing from which the reader derives a clearer vision of individuals or groups of moving figures in their habit as they lived. That the author was endowed in the highest degree with the faculty of visualisation is proved, not merely by his ability to stimulate the reader to form mental images, but even more by the fact that all the movements of individuals and groups can be followed with ease and certainty. Composition, in the larger sense of structural excellence, that quality common in French literature, but all too rare in English, and supposed to be notably lacking in *Piers the Plowman*, is one of the most striking features of this first vision.

What has just been said of the qualities of the first vision is true in equal degree of the second, *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*, properly so called, which occupies passus v—viii. In outline it is as follows:

At the close of the preceding vision, the king and his company went to the church to hear the services. The dreamer saw them enter, and awaked from his dream disappointed and sorrowful that he had not slept more soundly and seen more. But, ere he had gone a furlong, a faintness seized him, and he sat softly down and said his creed; then he fell asleep and saw more than he had seen before. He saw again the field full of folk and Conscience with a cross preaching among them, urging them to have pity on themselves and declaring that the pestilences were caused by their sins, and that the great storm of wind on Saturday at even (15 January 1362) was a punishment for pride. Wasters were warned to go to work; chapmen to cease spoiling their children; Pernel, to give up her purple; Thomas and Wat, to look after their frail and extravagant wives; priests, to practise what they preached; members of the religious orders, to keep their vows, lest the king and his council should take possession of their property; pilgrims, to cease journeying to St James, and seek St Truth. Then ran Repentance and moved the hearts of all; William wept; Pernel Proudheart prostrated herself; Lecher, Envy, Covetousness, Glutton, Sloth, Robert the Robber, all repented. The confessions of the seven deadly sins (an accident has deprived us of the confession of Wrath and of a portion of Envy's) follow one another with breathless rapidity, and the climax is reached when, in the words of the author, 'a thousand of men then thronged together, crying upward to Christ and to His pure Mother to have grace to seek St Truth—God grant they so may!'

With this *passus* v closes; but the movement of the narrative is uninterrupted. Some spurious lines printed by Skeat do, indeed, cause a semblance of at least a momentary delay; but the authentic text is better constructed.

There were few so wise, however, that they knew the way thither (i.e. to St Truth), but blustered forth as beasts over valleys and hills, till it was late and long that they met a person appparelled like a pilgrim, with relics of the many shrines he had visited. He had been at Sinai, Bethlehem, Babylon, Armenia, Alexandria and in many other places, but had never heard of St Truth, nor met a palmer seeking such a saint.

'By St Peter!' cried a ploughman, and put forth his head, 'I know him as well as a clerk his book; Conscience and Kind-Wit directed me to him and taught me to serve him ever. I have been his man these fifteen years, sowed his seed, kept his beasts, diked and delved and done his bidding in all things.'

The pilgrims offered him money to show them the way; but Piers, the ploughman, cried,

Nay, by the peril of my soul! I would not take a penny for the whole wealth of St Thomas's shrine; Truth would love me the less. But this is the way. You must go through Meekness till you come to Conscience-that-Christ-knows-that-you-love-him-dearer-than-the-life-in-your-hearts-and-your-neighbour-next. Then cross the brook Be-buxom-of-speech by the ford If-onourthy-father; pass by Swear-not-in-rain and the croft-Corvet-rot, with the two stocks Slay-not and Steal-not; stop not at Bear-no-false-witness, and then will be seed Say-sooth. Thus shalt-thou come to a court, clear as the sun; the moat is of Mercy, the walls of Wit, to keep Will out, the cornells of Christendom, the brattice of Faith, the roof of Brotherly Love. The tower in which Truth is set above the sun; he may do with the day-star what him dear liketh; Death dare do naught that he forbids. The gate-keeper is Grace, his man is Amend-thou, whose favour thou must procure. At the gate also are seven sisters, Abstinence, Humility, Charity, Chastity, Patience, Peace and Generosity. Any of their kin are welcomed gladly, and, unless one is kin to some of these seven, he gets no entrance except by grace.

'By Christ,' cried a cut-purse, 'I have no kin there!' And so said some others; but Piers replied, 'Yes; there is there a maiden, Mercy, who has power over them all. She is sib to all sinful, and, through help of her and her Son, you may get grace there, if you go early.'

*Passus* vii opens with the remark that this would be a difficult way without a guide at every step. 'By Peter!' replied Piers, 'were my half-acre ploughed, I would go with you myself.' 'That would be a long delay,' said a lady; 'what shall we women do meanwhile?' 'Sew and spin and clothe the needy.' 'By Christ!' exclaimed a knight, 'I never learned to plough; but teach me, and I will help you.' But Piers rejected his offer and bade him

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do only those services that belong to knighthood, and practise the virtues of a kindly lord. The knight promised to do so, and Piers prepared for his ploughing. Those who helped were to be fed. Before setting out on his journey, however, he wished to make his will, bequeathing his soul to God, his body to the church, his property to his wife to divide among his friends and his dear children.

Piers and the pilgrims set to work; some helped him to plough, others diked up the balks, others plucked weeds. At high prime (9 a.m.) Piers looked about and saw that some had merely been singing at the ale and helping him with 'hey, trolly-lolly!' He threatened them with famine, and the shirkers feigned to be lame or blind, and begged alms. 'I shall soon see if what you say is true,' said Piers; 'those who will not work shall eat only barley bread and drink of the brook. The maimed and blind I will feed, and anchorites once a day, for once is enough.' Then the wasters arose and would have fought. Piers called on the knight for protection, but the knight's efforts were vain. He then called upon Hunger, who seized Waster by the maw and wrung him so that his eyes watered, and beat the rascals till he nearly burst their ribs. Piers in pity came between them with a pease-loaf. Immediately all the sham ailments disappeared; and blind, bed-ridden, lame asked for work. Piers gave it to them, but, fearing another outbreak, asked Hunger what should be done in that event. The reply, which contains the author's view of the labour-problem, was that able-bodied beggars were to be given nothing to eat but horse-bread and dog-bread and bones and thus driven to work, but the unfortunate and the naked and needy were to be comforted with alms. In reply to a further question whether it is right to make men work, Hunger cited *Genesis*, *Proverbs*, *Matthew* and the *Psalms*. 'But some of my men are always ill,' said Piers. 'It comes of over-eating; they must not eat until they are hungry, and then only in moderation.' Piers thanked him, and gave him leave to go whenever he would; but Hunger replied that he would not go till he had dined. Piers had only cheese, curds, an oat-cake, a loaf of beans and bran and a few vegetables, which must last till harvest; so the poor people brought peascods, beans and cherries to feed Hunger. He waited more, and they brought pease and leeks. And in harvest they fed him plentifully and put him to sleep. Then beggars and labourers became dainty and demanded fine bread and fresh meats, and there was grumbling about wages and cursing of the king and

his council for the labour-laws. The author warns workmen of their folly, and prophesies the return of famine.

• In passus VIII we are told that Truth heard of these things and sent to Piers a message to work and a pardon *a poena et a culpa* for him and his heirs. Part in this pardon was granted to kings, knights and bishops who fulfil their duties. Merchants, because of their failure to observe holidays, were denied full participation; but they received a letter from Truth under his privy seal authorising them to trade boldly, provided they devoted their profits to good works, the building of hospitals, the repairing of bridges, the aiding of poor maidens and widows and scholars. The merchants were glad, and gave Will woollen clothes for his pains in copying their letter. Men of law had least pardon, because of their unwillingness to plead without money; for water and air and wit are common gifts, and must not be bought and sold. Labourers, if true and loving and meek, had the same pardon that was sent to Piers. False beggars had none for their wicked deeds; but the old and helpless, women with child, the maimed and the blind, since they have their purgatory here upon earth, were to have, if meek, as full pardon as the Plowman himself.

• Suddenly a priest asked to see Piers' pardon. It contained but two lines: *Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam eternam; qui vero mala, in ignem eternum.* 'By St Peter!' said the priest, 'I find here no pardon, but "do well, and have well, and God shall have thy soul; and do evil, and have evil, and to hell shalt thou go."' Piers, in distress, tore it asunder, and declared that he would cease to labour so hard and betake himself to prayers and penance, for David ate his bread with weeping, and Luke tells us that God bade us to take no thought for ourselves, but to consider how He feeds the birds. The priest then jested at the learning of Piers, and asked who taught him. 'Abstinence and Conscience,' said Piers. While they were disputing, the dreamer awoke and looked about, and found that it was noontime, and he himself meatless and moneyless on Malvern hills.

Here the vision ends, but passus VIII contains 53 lines more, in which the writer discusses the trustworthiness of dreams and the comparative value of Do-well and letters of indulgence.

In this second vision, the satire of passus V is very general, consisting, as it does, of a series of confessions by the seven deadly sins, in which each is sketched with inimitable vividness and brevity. It is significant of the author's religious views, and in

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harmony with such hints of them as he has given us elsewhere, that these confessions are not formal interviews with an authorised confessor, but, for the most part, sudden outcries of hearts which Conscience has wrought to contrition and repentance. The notable exceptions are the cases of Glutton and Sloth. Of these, the former has often been cited as one of the most remarkable pieces of *genre* painting in our early literature. It presents the veritable interior of an English ale-house in the fourteenth century, with all its basenesses and its gross hilarity.

Glutton is moved to repent, and starts for the church to confess, but, on his way thither, the ale-wife cries out to him. He says he is going to church to hear mass and confess. 'I have good ale, gossip; wilt thou try it?' He does not wish to drink, but asks if she has any spices to settle a queasy stomach. 'Yes, full good: pepper, peony, a pound of garlic and a little fennel-seed, to help toppers on fasting days.' So Glutton goes in, and finds a crowd of his boon companions, Cis the shoemaker's wife, Wat the warrener and his wife, Tomkin the tinker and two of his men, Hick and Hodge and Clarice and Pernel and a dozen others; and all welcome him and offer him ale. Then they begin the sport called the New Fair, a game for promoting drinking. The whole day passes in laughter and ribaldry and carousing, and, at even-song, Glutton is so drunk that he walks like a gloeman's dog, sometimes aside and sometimes aback. As he attempts to go out, he falls; and his wife and servant come, and carry him home and put him to bed. When he wakes, two days later, his first word is, 'Where is the cup?' But his wife lectures him on his wickedness, and he begins to repent and profess abstinence.

As for Sloth, his confession, though informal, is not sudden, for the sufficient reason that he is too slothful to do anything suddenly.

The satire of *passus* VI and VII is directed principally, if not solely, against the labouring classes. In sentiment and opinion the author is entirely in harmony with parliament, seeing in the efforts of the labourers to get higher wages for their work only the unjustifiable demands of wicked, lazy, lawless vagabonds. In regard to the remedy, however, he differs entirely from parliament. He sees no help in the Statutes of Labourers or in any power that the social organisation can apply; the vain efforts of the knight when called upon by Piers for protection from the yasters (VII, 140 ff.) clearly indicate this. The only hope of the re-establishment of good conditions lies in the possibility that the wicked may be terrified by the prospect of famine, God's punishment for

their wickedness, and may labour and live as does Piers Plowman, the ideal free labourer of the established order. The author is in no sense an innovator; he is a reformer only in the sense of wishing all men to see and feel the duties of the station in life to which they belong, and to do them as God has commanded.

Passus VIII is an explicit presentation of this idea, a re-assertion of the doctrine announced by Holy Church at the beginning of passus I and illustrated by all the visionary events that follow—the doctrine, namely, that, ‘When all treasure is tried, Truth is the best.’ The pardon sent to Piers is only another phrasing of this doctrine; and, though Piers himself is bewildered by the jibes of the priest and tears the pardon ‘in pure teen,’ though the dreamer wakes before the advent of any reassuring voice, and wakes to find himself hungry and poor and alone, we know authentically that there lies in the heart of the author not even the slightest question of the validity of his heaven-sent dreams.

The third vision, passus IX—XII of the A-text, differs from the first two, as has been said above, in very material respects. The theme is not presented by means of vitalised allegory; there are allegorical figures, to be sure, but their allegorical significance is only superficial, not essential; they engage in no significant action, but merely indulge in debate and disquisition; and what they say might be said by any one else quite as appropriately and effectively. Moreover, the clearness of phrasing, the orderliness and consecutiveness of thought, which so notably characterise the early visions, are entirely lacking, as are also the wonderful visualisation and vivid picturesqueness of diction. These differences are so striking that they cannot be overlooked by any one whose attention has once been directed to them. To the present writer they seem to justify the conclusion that in the third vision we have, not a poem written by the author of the first two, either immediately after them or even a few years later, but the work of a continuator, who tried to imitate the previous writer, but succeeded only superficially, because he had not the requisite ability as a writer, and because he failed to understand what were the distinctive features in the method of his model; but students of the poems have heretofore felt—without, I think, setting definitely before their minds the number and the character of these differences—that they were not incompatible with the theory of a single author for all the poems.

It is not intended to argue the question here, and, consequently,

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the differences will not be discussed further; but it may be of interest, to those who believe in a single author no less than to those who do not, to note, in addition, certain minor differences. The first writer seems not in the least interested in casuistry or theological doctrine, whereas notable features of the later passus are scholastic methods and interests, and a definite attitude towards predestination, which had been made by Bradwardine the foremost theological doctrine of the time, as we may infer from Chaucer and the author of *Pearl*. Indeed, the questions that interest the author of passus IX—XI are not only entirely different, but of a different order from those which interest the author of the first two visions. Further, the use of figurative language is entirely different; of the twelve similes in passus IX—XI four are rather elaborate, whereas all the twenty found in the earlier passus are simple, and, for the most part, stock phrases, like 'clear as the sun,' only four having so much as a modifying clause. The versification also presents differences in regard to the number of stresses in the half-line and in regard to run-on lines and masculine endings. Some of these differences begin to manifest themselves in the last fifty-three lines of passus VIII; and it is possible that the continuator began, not at IX, 1, but at VIII, 131. Of course, no one of the differences pointed out is, in itself, incompatible with the theory of a single author for all the passus of the A-text; but, taken together, they imply important differences in social and intellectual interests and in mental qualities and habits. They deserve, therefore, to be noted; for, if the same person is the author of all three visions, he has at least undergone profound and far-reaching changes of the most various kinds, and no mere general supposition of development or decay of his powers will explain the phenomena.

We proceed, then, without further discussion, to examine the contents of the later passus. Their professed subject is the search for Do-well, Do-better and Do-best, or, rather, for satisfactory definitions of them. What were the author's own views, it is very hard to determine; partly, perhaps, because he left the poem unfinished, but partly, also, because the objections which, as a disputant, he offers to the statements of others seem, sometimes, only cavils intended to give emphasis and definiteness to the views under discussion. It will be observed, however, that, on the whole, his model man is not the plain, honest, charitable labourer, like Piers, but the dutiful ecclesiastic. Other topics that are clearly of chief interest to the author are: the personal

responsibility of sane adults, and the vicarious responsibility of guardians for children and idiots; the duty of contentment and cheerful subjection to the will of God; the importance of pure and honourable wedlock; and the corruptions that have arisen, since the pestilence, in marriage and in the attitude of laymen towards the mysteries of faith, though Study, voicing, no doubt, the views of the author, admits that, but for the love in it, theology is a hard and profitless subject. There are also incidental discussions of the dangers of such branches of learning as astronomy, geometry, geomancy, etc.; of the chances of the rich to enter heaven; of predestination; and of the advantages as to salvation of the ignorant over the learned. A brief synopsis of these passus will make the method of treatment clearer.

Passus IX opens with the author roaming vainly about in his grey robes in search of Do-well, not in a dream, but while he is awake. At last, on a Friday, he meets two Franciscan friars, who tell him that Do-well dwells always with them. He denies this, in due scholastic form, on the ground that even the righteous sin seven times a day. The friars meet this argument by a rather confused illustration of a boat in which a man attempts to stand in a rough sea, and, though he stumbles and falls, does not fall out of the boat. The author declares he cannot follow the illustration, and says farewell. Wandering widely again, he reaches a wood, and, stopping to listen to the songs of the birds, falls asleep.

There came a large man, much like myself, who called me by name and said he was Thought. 'Do-well,' said Thought, 'is the meek, honest labourer; Do-better is he who to honesty adds charity and the preaching of sufferance; Do-best is above both and holds a bishop's crozier to punish the wicked. Do-well and Do-better have crowned a king to protect them all and prevent them from disobeying Do-best.'

The author is dissatisfied; and Thought refers him to Wit, whom they soon meet, and whom Thought questions on behalf of the dreamer (here called 'our Will').

In passus X, Wit says that Duke Do-well dwells in a castle with Lady Anima, attended by Do-better, his daughter, and Do-best. The constable of the castle is Sir Inwit, whose five sons, See-well, Say-well, Hear-well, Work-well and Go-well, aid him. Kind, the maker of the castle, is God; the castle is Caro (Flesh). Anima is Life; and Inwit is Discretion (not Conscience), as appears from a long and wandering discussion of his functions. Do-well destroys vices and saves the soul. Do-well is the fear of the Lord, and Do-better is the fear of punishment. If Conscience tells you that

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you do well, do not desire to do better. Follow Conscience and fear not. If you strive to better yourself, you are in danger; a rolling stone gathers no moss and a jack of all trades is good at none. Whether you are married man, monk, canon, or even beggar, be content and murmur not against God. Do-well is dread, and Do-better is sufferance; and of dread and its deeds springs Do-best. As the sweet red rose springs from the briar, and wheat from a weed, so Do-best is the fruit of Do-well and Do-better, especially among the meek and lowly, to whom God gives his grace. Keepers of wedlock please God especially; of them come virgins, martyrs, monks, kings, etc. False folk are conceived in an ill hour, as was Cain. His descendants were accursed; and so were those of Seth, who intermarried with them, though warned against it. Because of these marriages, God ordered Noah to build the ark, and sent the flood to destroy Cain's seed. Even the beasts perished for the sin of these marriages. Nowadays, since the pestilence, many unequal marriages are made for money. These couples will never get the Dunmow flitch. All Christians should marry well and live purely, observing the *tempora clausa*. Otherwise, rascals are born, who oppose Do-well. Therefore, Do-well is dread; and Do-better is sufferance; and so comes Do-best and conquers wicked will.

In passus XI, Wit's wife, Study, is introduced. She rebukes him for casting pearls before swine, that is, teaching wisdom to those who prefer wealth. Wisdom is despised, unless carded with covetousness as clothiers card wool; lovers of Holy Writ are disregarded; minstrelsy and mirth have become lechery and bawdy tales. At meals, men mock Christ and the Trinity, and scorn beggars, who would perish but for the poor. Clerks have God much in the mouth but little in the heart. Every 'boy' cavils against God and the Scriptures. Austin the Old rebukes such. Believe and pray, and evil not. Here now is a foolish fellow that wants to know Do-well from Do-better. Unless he live in the former, he shall not learn the latter.

At these words, Wit is confounded, and signals the author to seek the favour of Study. He, therefore, humbles himself, and Study is appeased, and promises to direct him to Clergy (Learning), and his wife, Scripture. The way lies by Sufferance, past Riches and Lechery, through Moderation of speech and of drink, to Clergy.

—Tell him you were sent by me, who taught him and his wife. I also taught Plato and Aristotle and all craftsmen. But theology has troubled me much;

had, save for the love in it, it is naught. Love is Do-well; and Do-better and Do-best are of Love's school. Secular science teaches deceit, but theology teaches love. Astronomy, geometry, geomancy, alchemy, necromancy and pyromancy are all evil; if you seek Do-well, avoid them. I founded them to deceive the people.

The author goes at once to Clergy and his wife and is well received by them. Clergy says that Do-well is the active life, Do-better is charity and Do-best is the clergy with benefices and power to help and possessions to relieve the poor. Runners-about are evil; there are many such now, and the religious orders have become rich. 'I had thought kings and knights were best, but now I see that they are not.' Scripture interrupts with the declaration that kinghood and knighthood and riches help not to heaven, and only the poor can enter. '*Contra!*' says the author; 'Whoever believes and is baptised shall be saved.' Scripture replies that baptism saves only *in extremis* and only repentant heathen, whereas Christians must love and be charitable. Help, therefore, and do not harm, for God says, 'Slay not! for I shall punish every man for his misdeeds, unless Mercy intervenes.' The author objects that he is no nearer his quest, for whatever he may do will not alter his predestined end; Solomon did well and wisely and so did Aristotle, and both are in hell.

If I follow their words and works and am damned, I were unwise; the thief was saved before the patriarchs; and Magdalen, David, and Paul did ill; and yet are saved; Christ did not commend Clergy, but said, 'I will teach you what to say'; and Austin the Old said that the ignorant seize heaven sooner than the learned.

Passus XII opens with the reply of Clergy: 'I have tried to teach you Do-well, but you wish to cavil. If you would do as I say, I would help you.' Scripture scornfully replies, 'Tell him no more! Theology and David and Paul forbid it; and Christ refused to answer Pilate; tell him no more!' Clergy creeps into a cabin and draws the door, telling the author to go and do as he pleases, well or ill. But the author earnestly beseeches Scripture to direct him to Kind-Wit (Natural Intelligence), her cousin and confessor. She says he is with Life, and calls, as a guide, a young clerk, *Omnia-probate*. 'Go with Will,' she orders, 'to the borough *Quod-bonum-est-tenete* and show him my cousin's house.' They set out together.

And here, it seems to me, this author ceased. The remaining lines I believe to have been written by one John But. They relate that ere the author reached the court *Quod-bonum-est-tenete*, he met with many wonders. First, as he passes through

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Yothth, he meets Hunger, who says that he dwells with Death, and seeks Life in order to kill him. The author wishes to accompany him, but, being too faint to walk, receives broken meats from Hunger, and eats too much. He next meets Fever, who dwells with Death and is going to attack Life. He proposes to accompany Fever; but Fever rejects his offer and advises him to do well and pray constantly.

Will knew that this speech was speedy; so he hastened and wrote what is written here and other works also of Piers the Plowman and many people besides. And, when this work was done, ere Will could espy, Death dealt him a dint and drove him to the earth; and he is now closed under clay, Christ have his soul! And so bade John But busily very often, when he saw these sayings alleged about James and Jerome and Job and others; and because he meddles with verse-making, he made this end. Now God save all Christians and especially king Richard and all lords that love him! and thou, Mary, Mother and Maiden, beseech thy Son to bring us to bliss!

Skeat originally ascribed to John But only the last twelve lines, beginning, 'And so bade John But.' It seems unlikely, however, that the 'end' which John But says he made refers to these lines only; certainly, it is not customary for scribes to use such a term for the supplications they add to a poem. And it is hard to conceive the motive of the author for finishing in this hasty fashion a poem which interested him, and which obviously had such immediate success. For these or similar reasons Skeat, later, admitted the possibility that the work of John But began seven lines earlier, with 'Will knew that this speech was speedy.' But the same reasoning applies to all the lines after l. 56, and an attentive reading of them will disclose several particulars at variance with the style or conceptions of the rest of the poem.

In closing our survey of the poems included in the A-text, we may note that, in their own day, they were not regarded as directed against the friars, for MS Rawl. Poet. 137 contains this inscription, 'in an old hand': *Hoc volumen conceditur ad usum fratrum minorum de observantia cantuariæ.*

Let us turn now to the B-text. There is no reason to doubt the current view that it was written, in part at least, between June 1376 and June 1377. Tyrwhitt showed that the famous rat-parliament inserted in the prologue referred to the time between the death of the Black Prince and that of Edward III, and must have been written while men were anxious about the situation which then existed. The increased emphasis given to the pesti-

lences in B, also points, as Skeat suggests, to a time not long after the pestilence of 1376. To these may be added the allusion to the drought and famine of April 1370 (XIII, 269—271) as 'not long passed.' No one, perhaps, believes that the whole of the B-text was written within the year indicated; but it has been generally assumed that the additions in the prologue antedate the rest of the B-text. For this assumption there is no reason except that the prologue is at the beginning of the poem. Two considerations suggest, though they by no means prove, that B, in his additions and insertions, did not always follow the order of the original poem. In the first place, in x, 115 is a promise of a discussion which occurs in XII. Any one who studies carefully B's methods of composition will find it easier to believe that B had already written XII when he thus referred to it, than that he purposely postponed a discussion. In the second place, it is hard to believe that such a writer as B, after becoming so thoroughly excited over political affairs as he shows himself to be in his insertion in the prologue, would have written the 4036 lines of his continuation of Do-well, Do-better and Do-best without again discussing them.

The author of the B-text, as we have seen, had before him, when he began his work, the three visions of the A-text. Whether he regarded them as the work of a single author is not our present concern. In his reworking of the poems he practically disregarded passus XII and changed the preceding eleven passus by insertions and expansions. Minor verbal alterations he also made, but far fewer than is usually supposed. Many of those credited to him are to be found among the variant readings of the A-text, and were merely taken over unchanged from the MS of A used as the basis.

Of the nine principal insertions made in the first two visions, six may be regarded as mere elaborations of the A-text, namely, the changed version of the footman, the confessions of Wrath, Avarice, Glutton and Sloth and the plea of Repentance. The other three, including the rat-parliament and the jubilee passages, are among the most important expressions of the political views of B, and will be discussed below. The insertions in the third vision, though elaborations of the A-text, are more difficult to characterise as to theme, on account of a tendency to rambling and vagueness sometimes almost degenerating into incoherency. The worst of them is the third (ix, 59—121), which ranges over indiscretion, gluttony, the duty of holy church to

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fools and orphans; the duty of charity, enforced by the example of the Jews; definitions of Do-well, Do-better and Do-best; waste of time and of speech; God's love of workers and of those faithful in wedlock. A few lines translated from this passage may serve to illustrate the author's mental processes, particularly his incapacity for organised or consecutive thinking, and his helpless subjection to the suggestions of the words he happens to use. They will also explain why students of these poems have found it impossible to give a really representative synopsis of his work. Let us begin with L 88, immediately after the citation of the brotherly love of the Jews:

The commons for their unkindness, I fear me, shall pay. Bishops shall be blamed because of beggars. He is worse than Judas that gives a jester silver, and bids the beggar go, because of his broken clothes. *Proditor est prelatus cum Iuda, qui patrimonium Christi mimis distribuit.* He does not well that does thus, and dreads not God Almighty, nor loves the saws of Solomon, who taught wisdom; *Initium sapientiae, timor Domini*: who dreads God does well; who greeds him for love and not for dread of vengeance does, therefore, the better; he does best that restrains himself by day and by night from wasting any speech or any space of time; *Qui offendit in uno in omnibus est reus.* Loss of time—Truth knows the sooth!—is most hated on earth of those that are in heaven; and, next, to waste speech, which is a sprig of grace and God's gleeman and a game of heaven; would never the faithful Father that His fiddle were untempered or His gleeman a rascal, a goor to taverns. To all true tidy men that desire to work Our Lord loves them and grants, loud or still, grace to go with them and procure their sustenance. *Inquirentes autem Dominum non minuentur omni bono.* True-wedded-living folk in this world is Do-well, etc.

As will be seen from this fairly representative passage, the author does not control or direct his own thought, but is at the mercy of any chance association of words and ideas; as Jusserand well says, *il est la victime et non le maître de sa pensée.*

In the series of visions forming B's continuation of the poems, the same qualities are manifest, and the same difficulty awaits the student who attempts a synopsis or outline of them. It is possible, indeed, to state briefly the general situation and movement of each vision, to say, e.g. that this presents the tree of Charity, and this the Samaritan; but the point of view is frequently and suddenly and unexpectedly shifted; topics alien to the main theme intrude because of the use of a suggestive word; speakers begin to expound views in harmony with their characters and end as mere mouthpieces of the author; *dramatis personae* that belong to one vision suddenly begin to speak and act in a later one as if they had been present all the time; others disappear even more mysteriously than they come.

Even the first of the added visions shows nearly all these peculiarities. At the beginning of passus XI, continuing the conversation of passus X, Scripture scorns the author and he begins to weep. Forgetting that he is already asleep and dreaming, the author represents himself as falling asleep and dreaming a new dream. Fortune ravished him alone into the land of Longing and showed him many marvels in a mirror called Mydlerd (i.e. the World). Following Fortune were two fair damsels, Concupiscencia-carnis and Covetyse-of-eyes, who comforted him, and promised him love and lordship. Age warned him, but Recklessness and Fauntelte (Childishness) made sport of the warning. Concupiscence ruled him, to the grief of Age and Holiness, and Covetyse comforted him forty-five years, telling him that, while Fortune was his friend, friars would love and absolve him. He followed her guidance till he forgot youth and ran into age, and Fortune was his foe. The friars forsook him. The reader expects to learn that this is because of his poverty, but, apparently, another idea has displaced this in the author's mind; for the reason given by him is that he said he would be buried at his parish church. For this, the friars held him a fool and loved him the less. He replied that they would not care where his body was buried provided they had his silver—a strange reply in view of the poverty into which he had fallen—and asked why they cared more to confess and to bury than to baptise, since baptism is needful for salvation. Lewte (Loyalty) looked upon him, and he loured. 'Why dost thou lour?' said Lewte. 'If I durst avow this dream among men?' 'Yea,' said he. 'They will cite "Judge not!"' said the author.

• Of what service were Law if no one used it? It is lawful for laymen to tell the truth, except parsons and priests and prelates of holy church; it is not fitting for them to tell tales, though the tale were true, if it touched sin. What is known to everybody, why shouldst thou spare to declare; but be not the first to blame a fault. Though thou see evil, tell it not first; be sorry it were not amended. Thing that is secret, publish it never; neither laud it for low, nor blame it for envy.

• 'He speaks truth,' said Scripture (who belongs not to this vision but to the preceding), and skipped on high and preached. But the subject she dismissed, if laymen knew it, they would love it the less, I believe. This was her theme and her text: "Many were summoned to a feast, and, when they were come, the porter plucked in a few and let the rest go away." Thereupon the author begins a long discussion with himself on predestination.

It is obvious that such writing as this defies analytical

presentation; and this is no isolated or rare instance. In certain passages where the author is following a narrative already organised for him, as in the rat-parliament of the prologue, or the account of the life of Christ in passus XVI, the rambling is less marked; but, if the narrative is long or elaborate, the author soon loses sight of the plan, as may be seen in the curious treatment, in passus XIX and XX, of the themes derived from *The Castle of Love*. In the instance last cited, the hopeless wandering occurs on so large a scale that it appears even in the synopses prepared by Skeat and others. Of the instances which disappear in synopsis, one of the most interesting is that of Activa-Vita, in passus XIII and XIV. Skeat's synopsis is as follows: 'Soon they meet with one Activa-Vita, who is a minstrel and seller of wafers. Patience instructs Activa-Vita, and declares that beggars shall have joy hereafter.' But the significant features are here omitted. Activa-Vita is the honest labourer, who provides bread for everybody, but, because he cannot please lords with lies and lewd jests, receives little reward. He is the friend and follower of Piers the Plowman. Yet, since he is Activa-Vita, in contact with the world, he is not spotless. The author therefore begins to tell us of the spots on Activa-Vita's coat, and, naturally, distributes them in the categories of the seven deadly sins. As soon as he enters upon this task he is perfectly helpless; he cannot control himself for his conceptions; and, consequently, he represents poor Activa-Vita as guilty of every one of the sins in its most wicked and vilest forms. The author of the C-text removed these passages to the confessions that followed the preaching of Conscience in the second vision; possibly, as Skeat thinks, in order to bring together passages of similar content and treatment, but, possibly, because such a contradiction in the character of Activa-Vita was too gross and glaring.

Recognising, then, the limitations with which every synopsis of the continuation by B must be resolved, we may say, briefly, that B adds seven visions, two and a fraction devoted to Do-well, two and a fraction to Do-better and two to Do-best. In the first (passus XI) there is no allegorical action; the dreamer meets various allegorical characters, such as Fortune, Recklessness, Nature and Reason, and hears them talk or talks himself either to them or to his readers. The subjects discussed are, as we have seen, very various; but chief among them are predestination, the value of poverty, incompetent priests and man's failure to follow reason as animals do. Following this, but not a vision, though it is dis-

tinguished from one only by the fact that the author is awake, is a long disquisition by Imaginative, containing views concerning the dangers and the value of learning and wealth very different from those expressed in A XL. The second vision begins with a dinner, given by Reason, at which are present the dreamer, Conscience, Clergy, Patience and a doctor of the church. Again there is no allegorical action; the dinner is only a device to bring together the disputants, who discuss theological subtleties. Following the dinner comes the interview with Activa-Vita described above. Conscience and Patience then instruct Activa-Vita to make amends by contrition and confession, and discuss at great length the benefits of poverty. The next vision is notable, though not unique, in containing a vision within a vision. In the first part (passus xv) Anima (also called Will, Reason, Love, Conscience, etc., an entirely different character from the Anima of A IX) discourses for 600 lines, mainly on knowledge, charity and the corruptions of the age due to the negligence of prelates; in the second part, when Anima, after describing the tree of Charity, says that it is under the care of Piers the Plowman, the dreamer swoons, for joy, into a dream, in which he sees Piers and the tree, and hears a long account of the fruits of the tree which gradually becomes a narrative of the birth and befrayal of Christ. At the close of this he wakes, and wanders about, seeking Piers, and meets with Abraham (or Faith), who expounds the Trinity; they are joined by Spes (Hope); and a Samaritan (identified with Jesus) cares for a wounded man whom neither Faith nor Hope will help. After this, the Samaritan expounds the Trinity, passing unintentionally to an exposition of mercy; and the dreamer wakes. In the next vision (passus xix) he sees Jesus in the armour of Piers ready to joust with Death; but, instead of the jousting, we have an account of the crucifixion, the debate of the Four Daughters of God and the harrowing of hell. He wakes and writes his dream, and, immediately, sleeps again and dreams that Piers, painted all bloody and like to Christ, appears. Is it Jesus or Piers? Conscience tells him that these are the colours and coat-armour of Piers, but he that comes so bloody is Christ. A discussion ensues on the comparative merits of the names Christ and Jesus, followed by an account of the life of Christ. Piers is Peter (or the church), to whom are given four oxen (the evangelists) and four horses (the four fathers of the church) and four seeds to sow. A house, Unity, is built to store the grain, and is attacked by Pride and his host; but this is forgotten in the episodes of the brewer's refusal

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to partake of the Sacrament, the vicar's attack on the cardinals and the justification by the king and lords of their own exactions. The dreamer wakes and encounters Need, who gives him instruction very similar to that of Conscience in the preceding dream. Falling asleep again, he has a vision of the attack of Antichrist and Pride and their hosts upon Unity, which insensibly becomes an attack by Death upon all mankind, varied by certain actions of Life, Fortune, Sloth, Despair, Avarice and the friar Flattery. Conscience, hard beset by Pride and Sloth, calls vainly for help to Contrition, and, seizing his staff, starts out on a search for Piers the Plowman. Whereupon the dreamer wakes.

Some scholars have regarded the poem as unfinished; others, as showing by the nature of its ending the pessimism of the author. It is true that it ends unsatisfactorily, and that one or more visions might well have been added; but it may be doubted whether the author ever could have written an ending that would have been artistically satisfactory. He had, as we have seen, no skill in composition, no control of his materials or his thought. The latter part of the poem is supposed to be devoted in regular order to Do-well, Do-better and Do-best; but it may be said, without injustice, that these subjects determine neither the nature of the main incidents nor the manner in which they are developed, and that what the author himself would doubtless have cited as the supreme expression of his view of Do-well, Do-better and Do-best occurs early in the vision of Do-well—I mean, of course, the famous *Disce, Doce, Dilige*, taught to Patience by his leman, Love. He could never have been sure of reserving to the end of his poem the subjects with which he intended to end, or of ceasing to write at the point at which he wished to cease. It remains curious, nevertheless, and, perhaps, significant, in view of the continual recurrence in the work of B of invectives against the corruptions of the age, that the poem does end with the triumph of Antichrist, and that there is no hint, as in Kirchmayer's *Pammachius*, of preparations for his defeat and the coming of an age of endless peace and good.

The reader who has been impressed with what has been said about the vagueness and lack of definite organisation and movement in B's work may be inclined to ask, What merits are his and what claim has he upon our interests? The reply is that his merits are very great indeed, being no less than those rated highest by previous students of the poems.—Skeat, Jusseland, ten-Brink, Henry Morley and a host of others. The very lack of

control, which is his most serious defect as an artist, serves to emphasise most convincingly his sincerity and emotional power, by the inevitableness with which, at every opportunity, he drifts back to the subjects that lie nearest his heart. Writing, as he did, without a definite plan and without power of self-direction, he touched, we may feel sure, not merely all subjects that were germane to his purpose, as a better artist would have done, but all that interested him deeply; and he touched most frequently those that interested him most. These subjects are, as is well known, the corruptions in the church, chiefly, perhaps, among the friars, but also, in no small measure, among the beneficed clergy; the dangers of riches and the excellence of poverty; the brotherhood of man; and the sovereign quality of love. To these should be added the idealisation of Piers the Plowman, elusive as are the forms which this idealisation often assumes. On the other hand, great as is the interest in political theory displayed by the author in the passages inserted in the prologue, this is not one of the subjects to which he constantly reverts; indeed, the only passage (xix, 462—476) on this subject in the later passus touches it so lightly as to suggest that the author's interest in it at this time was very slight. The frequency with which subjects recur is, of course, not the only indication of the sincerity and depth of the author's interest; the vividness and power of expression are equally significant.

‘Let some sudden emotion fill his soul,’ says Jusserand, ‘....and we shall wonder at the grandeur of his eloquence. Some of his simplest expressions are real *trouvailles*; he penetrates into the innermost recesses of our hearts, and then goes on his way, and leaves us pondering and thoughtful, filled with awe.’

Such are:

And anybede (mistreat) nouȝte thi bonde-men, the better may thou speke.

Though he be thyn underlyng, here, wel may happe in hevene,  
That he worth (shall be) worthier sette, and with more blisse,  
Than thou, bot thou do bette, and live as thou sulde;  
For in charnel atte chirche cherles ben yvel to knowe,  
Or a kniȝte from a knave,—knowe this in thin herte. vi, 46 ff.

For alle are we Crystes creatures, and of his coffres riche,  
And brethren as of e (one) blode, as wel beggares as orles xi, 122 ff.

Pore peple, thi prisoneres, Lord, in the put (pit) of myschief,  
Conforte the creatures that moche care sufferen,  
Thoriȝ derth, thorw drouth, alle her dayes here,  
Wo in wynter tymes for waiting of clothes,  
And in somer tyme selde (seldom) soupn to the fulle;  
Comforte thi careful, Oryst, in thi-ryche (kingdom)! xiv, 174 ff.

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The date usually assigned to the C-text is 1393—8. The only evidence of any value is the passage iv, 203—210, in which the author warns the king of the results of his alienation of the confidence and affection of his people. This, Skeat takes to be an allusion to the situation after the quarrel between the king and the Londoners in 1392; and, consequently, he selects 1393 as the approximate date of the poem, though he admits that it may be later. Jusserand argues that this local quarrel, which was soon composed, does not suit the lines of the poem as well as does the general dissatisfaction of 1397—9; and he, therefore, suggests 1398—9 as the date. Jusserand's view seems the more probable; but, even so early as 1386, parliament sent to inform the king that

*si rex... nec voluerit per jura regni et statuta ac laudibiles ordinationes cum salubri consilio dominorum et procerum regni gubernari et regulari, sed captose in suis insanis consiliis propriam voluntatem suam singularem proterve exercere, extunc licitum est eis.... regem de regali solio abrogare.*  
(Knighton, ii, 219.)

Of the changes and additions made by C we can here say very little, mainly for the reason that they are numerous, and small, and not in pursuance of any well-defined plan. There are multitudinous alterations of single words or phrases, sometimes to secure better alliteration, sometimes to get rid of an archaic word, sometimes to modify an opinion, but often for no discoverable reason, and, occasionally, resulting in positive injury to the style or the thought. Certain passages of greater or less length are entirely or largely rewritten, rarely for any important modification of view; never, perhaps, with any betterment of style. At times, one is tempted to think they were rewritten for the mere sake of rewriting, but many whole pages are left practically untouched. Transpositions occur, sometimes resulting in improvement, sometimes in confusion. Excisions or omissions may be noted which seem to have been made because C did not approve of the sentiments of the omitted passages; but there are other omissions which cannot be accounted for on this ground or on that of any artistic intention. The additions are all of the nature of elaborations or expansions and insertions. Some of these have attracted much attention as giving information concerning the life and character of the dreamer or author; these will be dealt with below. Others give us more or less valuable hints of the views and interests of the writer; such are the passage accusing priests of image worship and of forging miracles; an account of the fall of Lucifer, with speculations as to why he made his seat in the

‘north’; an attack on regraters; the long confused passage<sup>1</sup> comparing the two kinds of meed to grammatical relations. Still others modify, in certain respects, the opinions expressed in the B-text. For example, xv, 30—32 indicates a belief in astrology out of harmony with the earlier condemnation of it; the attitude on free-will in xi, 51—55 and xvii, 158—182 suggests that, unlike B, and the continuator of A, C rejected the views of Bradwardine on grace and predestination; several passages on riches and the rich<sup>2</sup> show a certain eagerness to repudiate any such condemnation of the rich as is found in B; and, finally, not only is the striking passage in B<sup>3</sup>, cited above, in regard to the poor, omitted, but, instead of the indiscriminate almsgiving insisted upon by B, C distinctly condemns it<sup>4</sup> and declares<sup>5</sup> that charity begins at home—‘Help thi kynne, Crist bit (bids), for ther begynneth charite.’

On the whole, it may be said that the author of the C-text seems to have been a man of much learning, of true piety and of genuine interest in the welfare of the nation, but unimaginative, cautious and a very pronounced pedant.

The reader may desire a justification, as brief as possible, of the conclusion assumed throughout this chapter that the poems known under the title, *Piers the Plowman*, are not the work of a single author. So much of the necessary proof has already been furnished in the exposition of the different interests and methods and mental qualities displayed in the several parts of the work that little more will be necessary. The problem seems very simple: the differences pointed out—and others which cannot be discussed here—do exist; in the absence of any real reason to assume that all parts of this cluster of poems are the work of a single author, is it not more probable that several writers had a hand in it than that a single writer passed through the series of great and numerous changes necessary to account for the phenomena? To this question an affirmative answer will, I think, be given by any one who will take the trouble to examine separately the work of A (i.e. A, prol.—passus. viii), the continuator of A (A, ix—xii, 55), B and C—that is, to read carefully any passages of fifty or a hundred lines showing the work of each of these authors unmixed with lines from any of the others. In such an examination, besides the larger matters discussed throughout this chapter, the metre and the sentence structure will repay

<sup>1</sup> iv, 235.

<sup>2</sup> xiii, 154—247; xiv, 26—100; xviii, 21; xx, 222—246.

<sup>3</sup> xiv, 174—260.

<sup>4</sup> x, 71—281.

<sup>5</sup> xviii, 53—71.

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special attention. The system of scansion used will make no difference in the result; but that expounded by Luick will bring out the differences most clearly. It will be found that the writers differ in their conceptions of the requirements of alliterative verse, A being nearest to the types established by Luick, both in regard to stresses and secondary-stresses and in regard to alliteration. This can be most easily tested by Luick's plan of considering separately the second-half-lines. Another interesting test is that of the use of the visual imagination. A presents to his own mind's eye and to that of his reader distinct visual images of figures, of groups of figures and of great masses of men; it is he who, as Jusserand says, 'excels in the difficult art of conveying the impression of a multitude.' A also, through his remarkable faculty of visual imagination, always preserves his point of view, and, when he moves his action beyond the limits of his original scene, causes his reader to follow the movement; best of all for the modern reader, he is able, by this faculty, to make his allegory vital and interesting; for, though the world long ago lost interest in personified abstractions, it has never ceased to care for significant symbolical action and utterance. On the other hand, B, though capable of phrases which show, perhaps, equal power of visualising detail, is incapable of visualising a group or of keeping his view steady enough to imagine and depict a developing action. The continuator of A and the reviser C show clearly that their knowledge of the world, their impressions of things, are derived in very slight measure, if at all, from visual sensations. These conclusions are not invalidated, but rather strengthened, by the fondness of B and C and the continuator of A for similes and illustrations, such as never appear in A.

Moreover, the number of instances should be noted in which B has misunderstood A or spoiled his picture, or in which C has done the same for B. Only a few examples can be given here. In the first place, B has such errors as these: in II, 21 ff. *Lewte* is introduced as the leman of the lady Holy Church and spoken of as feminine; in II, 25, *False*, instead of *Wrong*, is father of *Meed*, but is made to marry her later; in II, 74 ff. B does not understand that the *feoffment* covers precisely the provinces of the seven deadly sins, and, by elaborating the passage, spoils the unity of the intention; in II, 176, B has forgotten that the bishops are to accompany *Meed* to Westminster, and represents them as borne 'abrode in visytinge,' etc., etc. Worst of all, perhaps, B did not notice that, by the loss or displacement of a leaf be-

tween A, v, 235, 236, the confessions of Sloth and Robert the Robber had been absurdly run together; or that in A, vii, 71—74 the names of the wife and children of Piers, originally written in the margin opposite ll 89—90 by some scribe, had been absurdly introduced into the text, to the interruption and confusion of the remarks of Piers in regard to his preparations for his journey. Of C's failures to understand B two instances will suffice. In the prologue, 11—16, B has taken over from A a vivid picture of the valley of the first vision:

Thanne gan I to meten a merveilouse swete,  
That I was in a wilderness, wist I never where;  
As I behelde in-to the est an hiegh to the sonne,  
I seigh a toure on a toft, trielich ymaked;  
A depe dale benethe, a dongeon there-inne,  
With depe dyches and derke and dreadful of sight.

C spoils the picture thus:

And merveilously me mette, as ich may now telle;  
Al the welthe of this worlde and the weo bothe,  
Wynkyng, as it were, wyterly ich saw hyt,  
Of trythe and of tricherye, of tresoun and of gyle,  
Al ich saw slepyng, as ich shal now telle.  
Esteward ich byhulde, after the sonne,  
And sawe a toure, as ich trowede, truthe was ther-ynne;  
Westwaghe ich waitede, in a whyle after,  
And sawe a deep dale; deth, as ich lydede,  
Womede in the wones, and wyckede spiritus.

The man who wrote the former might, conceivably, in the decay of his faculties write a passage like the latter; but he could not, conceivably, have spoiled the former, if he had ever been able to write it. Again, in the famous rat-parliament, the rat 'renable of tonge' says:

I have ysein segges in the cite of London  
Beren byes ful bryte aboute here nekkes,  
And some colers of crafty werk; uncoupled thei wenden  
Bothe in wareine and in waste, where hem leve lyketh;  
And otherwhile thei aren elles-where, as I here telle.  
Were there a belle on here bel, bi Ihesu, as me thynketh,  
Men myste wite where thei went, and woe reame!

B, *Prol.* 160—6.

Clearly the 'segges' he has seen wearing collars about their necks in warren and in waste are dogs. C, curiously enough, supposed them to be men:

Ich have yseie grete yseie en cytees and in tounes  
Bere byes of bryst gold al aboute hure neckes,  
And colers of crafty werke, bothe knyghtes and squiers.  
Were ther a belle on hure bye, by Iesus, as me thynketh,  
Men myste wite wher thei wenten, and hure wey rounne! .

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Other misunderstandings of equal significance exist in considerable number; these must suffice for the present. I may add that a careful study of the MSS will show that between A, B and C there exist dialectical differences incompatible with the supposition of a single author. This can be easily tested in the case of the pronouns and the verb *are*.

With the recognition that the poems are the work of several authors, the questions concerning the character and name of the author assume a new aspect. It is readily seen that the supposed autobiographical details, given mainly by B and C, are, as Jack conclusively proved several years ago, not genuine, but mere parts of the fiction. Were any confirmation of his results needed, it might be found in the fact that the author gives the names of his wife and daughter as Kitte and Kalote. Kitte, if alone, might not arouse suspicion, but, when it is joined with Kalote (usually spelled 'callet'), there can be no doubt that both are used as typical names of lewd women, and are, therefore, not to be taken literally as the names of the author's wife and daughter. The picture of the dreamer, begun by A in prologue, 2, continued by the continuator in IX, 1 and elaborated by B and C, is only a poetical device, interesting in itself but not significant of the character or social position of any of these authors. Long Will, the dreamer, is, obviously, as much a creation of the muse as is Piers the Plowman.

What shall we say of the name, William Langland, so long connected with the poems? One MS of the C-text has a note in a fifteenth century hand (but not early):

*Memorandum, quod Stacy de Rehakyle, pater Willielmi de Langland, qui Stacius fuit generosus et morabatur in Schiptone under Whicwode, tenens domini le Spenser in comitatu Oxon., qui praedictus Willielmus fecit librum qui vocatur Perys Ploughman.*

Another fifteenth century note in a MS of the B-text says: 'Robert or William langland made pers ploughman.' And three MSS of the C-text (one, not later than 1427) give the author's name as 'Willelmus W.' Skeat is doubtless right in his suggestion that the name Robert arose from a misreading of C, XI, 1; but he and Jusserand find in B, xv, 148: 'I

I have lyved in londe, quod I, my name is long wille,' confirmation of the first note quoted above. It is possible, however, that this is really the source of the name. Curiously enough, this line is omitted by C, either because he wished to suppress it or because he did not regard it as significant. Furthermore,

Pearson showed pretty conclusively that, if the author was the son of Stacy de Rokayle (or Rokeale) of Shipton-under-Wychwood, his name, if resembling Langland at all, would have been Langley. If ~~this~~ were the case, Willelmus W. might, obviously, mean William of Wychwood, as Morley suggested, and be merely an alternative designation of William Langley—a case similar to that of the Robertus Langelye, alias Robertus Parterick, *capellanus*, who died in 19 Richard II, possessed of a messuage and four shops in the Flesh-shambles, a tenement in the Old Fish-market and an interest in a tenement in Staining-lane, and who may, conceivably, have had some sort of connection with the poems. It is possible, of course, that these early notices contain a genuine, even if confused, record of one or more of the men concerned in the composition of these poems. One thing, alone, is clear, that Will is the name given to the figure of the dreamer by four, and, possibly, all five, of the writers; but it is not entirely certain that A really meant to give him a name. Henry Bradley has, in a private letter, called my attention to certain facts which suggest that Will may have been a conventional name in alliterative poetry.

If we cannot be entirely certain of the name of any of these writers except John But, can we determine the social position of any of them? John But was, doubtless, a scribe, or a minstrel like the author of *Wynmere and Wastoure*. B, C and the continuator of A seem, from their knowledge and theological interests, to have been clerics, and, from their criticisms of monks and friars, to have been of the secular clergy. C seems inclined to tone down criticisms of bishops and the higher clergy, and is a better scholar than either the continuator of A (who translated *non meaberis* by 'slay not' and *iq̄descebam* by 'I said nothing') or B (who accepted without comment the former of these errors). A, as has been shown already, exempts from his satire no order of society except monks, and may himself have been one, but, as he exhibits no special theological knowledge or interests, he may have been a layman.

In one of the MSS of the B-text occurs a fragment of a poem which is usually associated with *Piers the Plowman*. It has no title in the MS and was called by its first editor, Thomas Wright, *A Poem on the Deposition of Richard II*; but Skeat, when he re-edited it in 1873 and 1886, objected to this title as being

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inaccurate, and re-named it *Richard the Redeless*, from the first words of passus I. Henry Bradley has recently called attention to the fact that it was known to Nicholas Brigham in the first part of the sixteenth century as *Mum, Sothsegger* (i.e. *Hugh, Truth-teller*). There can be no doubt that this was, as Bradley suggests, the ancient title; for it is not such a title as would have been chosen either by Brigham or by Bale, who records it. The copy seen by Brigham, as it had a title, cannot have been the fragmentary copy that is now the only one known to us. Wright regarded the poem as an imitation of *Piers the Plowman*; Skeat undertook to prove, on the basis of diction, dialect, metre, statements in the text itself, etc., that it was the work of the same author. But claims of authorship made in these poems are not conclusive, as will be seen in the discussion of the *Ploughman's Tale*; and the resemblances in external form, in dialect, in versification, etc., on which Skeat relies, are not greater than might be expected of an imitator, while there are such numerous and striking differences in diction, versification, sentence structure and processes of thought from every part of *Piers the Plowman*, that identity of authorship seems out of the question. The poem, as has been said, is a fragment; and Skeat thinks that it may have been left unfinished by the author in consequence of the deposition of Richard. But the MS in which it is found is not the original, but a copy; and the prologue seems to imply that the poem had been completed when the prologue was written. The author professes to be a loyal subject and friendly adviser of Richard, but the tone of the poem itself is strongly partisan to Henry of Lancaster, and, curiously enough, nearly all the remarks in regard to Richard imply that his rule was entirely at an end. This latter fact is, of course, not incompatible with Skeat's view that the poem was written between the capture and the formal deposition of Richard, i.e. between 18 August and 20 September 1399. As to the form and contents of the poem, it is not a vision, but consists of a prologue, reciting the circumstances of its composition, and three passus and part of a fourth, setting forth the errors and wrongs of Richard's rule. Passus I is devoted to the misdeeds of his favourites. Passus II censures the crimes of his retainers (the White Harts) against the people, and his own folly in failing to cherish such men as Westmoreland (the Greyhound), while Henry of Lancaster (the Eagle) was strengthening his party. Passus III relates the unnaturalness of the White Harts in attacking the Colt, the Horse, the Swan, and the Bear,

with the return of the Eagle for vengeance, and then digresses into an attack upon the luxury and unwisdom of Richard's youthful counsellors. Passus IV continues the attack upon the extravagance of the court, and bitterly condemns the corrupt parliament of 1397 for its venality and cowardice.

The influence of *Piers the Plowman* was wide-spread and long-continued. There had been many satires on the abuses of the time (see Wright's *Political Poems* and *Political Songs and Poems*), some of them far bitterer than any part of these poems, but none equal in learning, in literary skill and, above all, none that presented a figure so captivating to the imagination as the figure of the Ploughman. From the evidence accessible to us it would seem that this popularity was due, in large measure, to the B-text, or, at least, dated from the time of its appearance, though, according to my view, the B-text itself and the continuation of A were due to the impressiveness of the first two visions of the A-text.

Before discussing the phenomena certainly due to the influence of these poems, we must devote a few lines to two interesting but doubtful cases. In 1897, Gollancz edited for the Roxburghe Club two important alliterative poems, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* and *Wynnere and Wastoure*, both of which begin in a manner suggestive of the beginning of *Piers the Plowman*, and both of which contain several lines closely resembling lines in the B-text of that poem. The lines in question seem, from their better relation to the context, to belong originally to *Piers the Plowman* and to have been copied from it by the other poems; if there were no other evidence, these poems would, doubtless, be placed among those suggested by it; but there is other evidence. *Wynnere and Wastoure* contains two allusions that seem to fix its date at c. 1350, and *The Parlement* seems to be by the same author. The two allusions are to the twenty-fifth year of Edward III (l. 206), and to William de Shreshall as chief baron of the exchequer (l. 317). The conclusion is, apparently, inevitable that the imitation is on the part of *Piers the Plowman*. In *The Parlement* the author goes into the woods to hunt, kills a deer and hides it. Then, falling asleep, he sees in a vision three men, Youth, Middle-Age and Age, clad, respectively, in green, grey and black, who dispute concerning the advantages and disadvantages of the ages they represent. Age relates the histories of the Nine Worthies,

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and declares that all is vanity. He hears the bugle of Death summoning him, and the author wakes. In *Wynners and Wastoure* the author, a wandering minstrel, after a prologue bemoaning the degeneracy of the times and the small respect paid to the author of a romance, tells how

Als I went in the weste wandrynge myn one,  
Bi a bonke of a bourne bryghte was the sonne.

I layde myn hede one an hill ane hawthorne besyde.

And I was swythe in a sweten sweped belyve;  
Methoghte I was in a werlde, I ne wiste in whate ende.

He saw two armies ready to fight; and

At the creste of a cliffe a caban was rered,

ornamented with the colours and motto of the order of the Garter, in which was the king, whose permission to fight was awaited. The king forbade them to fight and summoned the leaders before him. There is a brilliant description of the embattled hosts. The two leaders are Wynners and Wastoure, who accuse each other before the king of having caused the distress of the kingdom. The end of the poem is missing. Both poems are of considerable power and interest in themselves, and are even more significant as suggesting, what is often forgotten, that the fourteenth century was a period of great and wide-spread intellectual activity, and that poetical ability was not rare.

Not in the metre of *Piers the Plowman*, but none the less significant, of the powerful hold which the figure of the Plowman obtained upon the English people, are the doggerel letters of the insurgents of 1381, given by Walsingham and Knighton, and reprinted by Maurice and Trevelyan. Trevelyan makes a suggestion which has doubtless occurred independently to many others, that '*Piers Plowman* may perhaps be only one characteristic fragment of a mediæval folk-lore of allegory, which expressed for generations the faith and aspirations of the English peasant, but of which Langland's great poem alone has survived.' One would like to believe this; but the mention of 'do well and better' in the same letter with *Piers Plowman* makes it practically certain that the writer had in mind the poems known to us and not merely a traditional allegory; though it may well be that *Piers the Plowman* belonged to ancient popular tradition.

Next in order of time was, doubtless, the remarkable poem called *Percy the Ploughmans Crede*, which Skeat assigns to 'not

long after the latter part of 1393. The versification is imitated from *Piers the Plowman*, and the theme, as well as the title, was clearly suggested by it. It is, however, not a vision, but an account of the author's search for some one to teach him his creed. He visits each of the orders of friars. Each abuses the rest and praises his own order, urging the inquirer to contribute to it and trouble himself no more about his creed. But he sees too much of their worldliness and wickedness, and refuses. At last, he meets a plain, honest ploughman, who delivers a long and bitter attack upon friars of all orders, and, finally, teaches the inquirer the much desired creed. The poem is notable, not only for the vigour of its satire, but also for the author's remarkable power of description.

With the *Crede* is often associated the long poem known as *The Ploughman's Tale*. This was first printed, in 1542 or 1535, in Chaucer's works and assigned to the Ploughman. That it was not written by Chaucer has long been known, but, until recently, it has been supposed to be by the author of the *Crede*. The poem, though containing much alliteration, is not in alliterative verse, but in rimed stanzas, and is entirely different in style from the *Crede*. The differences are such as indicate that it could not have been written by the author of that poem. It has recently been proved by Henry Bradley, that very considerable parts of the poem, including practically all the imitations of the *Crede*, were written in the sixteenth century. These passages were also independently recognised as interpolations by York Powell and this was communicated privately to Skeat, who now accepts Bradley's conclusions. Bradley thinks that the poem may contain some genuine stanzas of a Lollard poem of the fourteenth century, but that it underwent two successive expansions in the sixteenth century, both with the object of adapting it to contemporary controversy. The relation of even the fourteenth century portion to *Piers the Plowman* is very remote.

Three pieces belonging to the Wyclifite controversy, which also bear a more or less remote relation to *Piers the Plowman*, are ascribed by their editor, Thomas Wright, to 1401, and by Skeat, who re-edited the first of them, to 1402. The first of them, called *Jacke Upland*, is a violent attack upon the friars by one of the Wyclifite party. By John Bale, who rejected as wrong the attribution of it to Chaucer, it is, with equal absurdity, attributed to Wyclif himself. There is some alliteration in the piece, which made Wright suppose it to have been originally written in

## 40 *Piers the Plowman and its Sequence*

alliterative verse. Skeat denies that it was ever intended as verse, and he seems to be right in this, though his repudiation of Wright's suggestion that our copy of the piece is corrupt is hardly borne out by the evidence. The second piece, *The Reply of Friar Daw Thopias*, is a vigorous and rather skilful answer to *Jacke Upland*. The author, himself a friar, is not content to remain on the defensive, but tries to shift the issue by attacking the Lollards. According to the *explicit* of the MS the author was John Walsingham, who is stated by Bale to have been a Carmelite. This piece is in very rude alliterative verse. *The Rejoinder of Jacke Upland*, which is preserved in the same MS with the *Reply*, is of the same general character as *Jacke Upland*, though, perhaps through the influence of the *Reply*, it contains a good deal more alliteration. None of these pieces has any poetical merit, but all are vigorous and interesting examples of the popular religious controversy of the day.

Very evidently due to the influence of *Piers the Plowman* is a short alliterative poem of 144 lines, addressed, apparently, to Henry V in 1416, and called by Skeat, its editor, *The Crowned King*. In a vision the author looks down into a deep dale, where he sees a multitude of people and hears a crowned king ask his commons for a subsidy for his wars; to the king a clerk kneels, and, having obtained leave to speak, urges him to cherish his people and beware of evil counsellors and of avarice. The piece is sensible and well written, but is entirely lacking in special poetical quality.

Of entirely uncertain date is an interesting allegorical poem called *Death and Life*, preserved in the Percy Folio MS. Its relation to *Piers the Plowman* is obvious and unmistakable. In a vision, closely modelled on the vision of the prologue, the poet witnesses a strife between the lovely lady Dame Life and the foul freke Dame Death, which was clearly suggested by the 'Vita de Do-best' of *Piers the Plowman*. In spite of its large indebtedness to the earlier poem, it is a work of no little originality and power.

In the same priceless MS is preserved another alliterative poem, which Skeat regards as the work of the author of *Death and Life*. It is called *The Scottish Feilde* and is, in the main, an account of the battle of Flodden. The author, who describes himself as 'a gentleman, by Jesu' who had his 'bidding place' 'at Bagily' (i.e. at Baggily Hall, Cheshire), was an ardent adherent of the Stanleys and wrote for the specific purpose of

celebrating their glorious exploits at Bosworth Field and at Flodden. The poem seems to have been written shortly after Flodden, and, perhaps, rewritten or revised later. That the author of this poem, spirited chronicle though it be, was capable of the excellences of *Death and Life*, is hard to believe; the resemblances between the poems seem entirely superficial and due to the fact that they had a common model.

The influence of *Piers the Plowman* lasted, as we have seen, well into the sixteenth century; indeed, interest in both the poem and its central figure was greatly quickened by the supposed relations between it and Wyclifism. The name or the figure of the Ploughman appears in innumerable poems and prose writings, and allusions of all sorts are very common. Skeat has given a list of the most important of these in the fourth volume of his edition of *Piers Plowman* for the Early English Text Society.

. We are accustomed to regard the fourteenth century as, on the whole, a dark epoch in the history of England—an epoch when the corruptions and injustices and ignorance of the Middle Ages were piling themselves ever higher and higher; when the Black Death, having devoured half the population of city and hamlet, was still hovering visibly like a gaunt and terrible vulture over the affrighted country; when noblemen and gentry heard in indignant bewilderment the sullen murmur of peasants awakening into consciousness through pain, with now and then a shriller cry for vengeance and a sort of blind justice; an epoch when intellectual life was dead or dying, not only in the universities, but throughout the land. Against this dark background we seemed to see only two bright figures, that of Chaucer, strangely kindled to radiance by momentary contact with the renaissance, and that of Wyclif, no less strange and solitary, striving to light the torch of reformation, which, hastily muffled by those in authority, smouldered and sparkled fitfully a hundred years before it burst into blaze. With them, but farther, in the background, scarcely distinguishable, indeed, from the dark figures among which he moved, was dimly discerned a gaunt dreamer, clothed in the dull grey russet of a poor shepherd, now watching with lustreless but seeing eye the follies and corruptions and oppressions of the great city, now driven into the wilderness, by the passionate protests of his aching heart, but ever shaping into crude, formless but powerful visions images of the wrongs and oppressions which he hated and of the growing hope which, from time to time, was revealed to his eager eyes.

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That the Black Death was a horrible reality the statistics of its ravages prove only too well; that there was injustice and misery, ignorance and intellectual and spiritual darkness, is only too true; but the more intimately we learn to know the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the more clearly do we see, not only Grosseteste and Ockham and Richard of Armagh, but a host of forgotten or nameless men who battled for justice, and kindliness, and intellectual and spiritual light; and our study of the *Piers the Plowman* cluster of poems has shown us that that confused voice and that mighty vision were the voice and vision, not of one lonely, despised wanderer, but of many men, who, though of diverse tempers and gifts, cherished the same enthusiasm for righteousness and hate for evil.

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY . .

RICHARD ROLLE. WYCLIF. THE LOLLARDS .

It is often difficult to deal adequately with individual writers in the Middle Ages. Both the general ideas and the literary habits of the time tended to hide the traces of individual work. Schools of thought were more important than their individual members; at times, therefore, single thinkers or writers received less than their due recognition because their achievements became the common property of a school. Hence, we find it not always easy to assign to any single writer his proper place in literary history, and the difficulty is increased by medieval methods of composition. Manuscripts were so widely copied, often with alterations and additions, that individual ownership was almost lost. Then, when in later days men sought to trace the work and influence of individuals, they ran two opposite risks: sometimes, they were likely to under-estimate the individual's influence; sometimes, they were likely to ascribe to one man tendencies and works which belonged rather to his school. It is not surprising, then, that a great deal still remains to be done in the publication and arrangement of manuscripts before a definite verdict can be given upon some problems of early literary history. As might be expected, moreover, this difficulty is most to be felt in some of the matters nearest to daily life: where the feet of generations passed the oftenest, traces of their forerunners were easiest lost. Richard Rolle of Hampole and John Wyclif were men very different in their lives and in their ecclesiastical standpoints, but the lives of both illustrate these statements, and the same kind of difficulty arises in respect of each of them. Much has been assigned to them that was not really theirs: after this first mistake has been repaired, it becomes possible to judge them more fairly. But, even then, it cannot be done fully and finally until the materials have been sifted and arranged.

. . . . .

## 44 *Religious Movements in the XIVth Century.*

By the fourteenth century, the north of England had long lost its former literary leadership, but its impulses had not quite died away, and the growing connection with Oxford, strengthened by the foundation of Balliol College (c. 1263), brought even outlying villages under the influence of great intellectual and religious movements. When Richard Rolle went up to Oxford, the friars, with their ideal of poverty, were still a powerful party there, although, before long, Fitz-Ralph was to attack their view of life; and contests between realists and nominalists were the chief intellectual interests. The young student's connection with Oxford did not last long; but it coloured the whole of his life, and his first writings were modelled upon academic forms. He must, also, have gone through much intellectual and spiritual trouble, if we may judge from the crisis that changed his life. But he took away with him from Oxford a sufficient knowledge of Latin, an acquaintance with, and some distaste for, the ordinary philosophical writers and, above all, a love of the Scriptures. By a regulation of Grosseteste, the first morning lecture had to be upon the Bible, which furnished the material for much of the teaching.

Richard Rolle was born, probably about 1300, although the exact date is unknown, at Thornton-le-Dale, near the old town of Pickering, if a note in one of the manuscripts concerning him is to be believed; at Thornton-le-Street, if a modern conjecture, which places his birth nearer the scenes of his earliest activity, is to be accepted. When he was nineteen he came home from Oxford, eager, because he feared disaster to his soul, to follow the life of a hermit; he asked his sister to meet him near his home and bring with her two of her frocks, a grey and a white, and, out of these, along with his father's hood, he made himself a rough and ready hermit's dress. Thus clad, he visited a church where worshipped the family of Dalton—two youths of which had known him at Oxford. On a second visit, he put on a surplice and, with the leave of the priest, preached an affecting sermon at Mass. The former undergraduates recognised him and asked him to their table at home. His father, a man of some substance, was known to the Daltons, and, struck by Richard's sermon and his earnestness, they settled him as a hermit upon their estate. Hermits were a common feature of medieval life: they were under episcopal control and received episcopal licence; hence, they were often spoken of by bishops as 'our hermits'; indulgences were often granted to those who supported them, and they themselves often did useful service in the repair of roads and keeping up of bridges.

After a time—four years at least—he left his first cell for another at Ainderby, near Northallerton, where a friend of his, Margaret Kirby, lived in much the same way that he did. Another change brought him to Hampole, near Doncaster; and here, kindly cherished by Cistercian nuns, he lived for the rest of his days. The end came 29 September 1349<sup>1</sup>—the year of the Black Death. So great had been his popularity that the nuns of Hampole sought his canonisation: an office for his festival—20 January—was composed (probably about 1381—2), and, later, a collection of miracles ascribed to his influence was made. Although not formally canonised, he was regarded as a saint; and his reputation gave wider currency to his writings.

Rolle was not a priest, although, perhaps, in minor orders. If his spiritual advice was sought by many—especially by Margaret Kirby, the recluse of Ainderby, by another recluse at Yedingham and by nuns at Hampole—it was because of his spiritual insight rather than his position. He stood equally aloof from academic thought and general life—ecclesiastical and civil; he wished to retire from the world and, by contemplation, reach a knowledge of God and an elevation of soul. Through the mystic stages of purgation and illumination, he reached, after two and a half years, the third stage, the contemplation of God through love. Here, he had an insight into the joys of heaven, and, in this stage, he passed through the *calor*, the warmth of divine love, which fired his being with effects almost physical; then there came into his life the *canor*, the spiritual music of the unseen world, the whispering sound as of heaven itself; and, together with these, he experienced the *dulcor*, the sweetness as of the heavenly atmosphere itself. If he mixed, at times, with the outside world, even with the rich of the world, if he jested, at times, as he went his way among them, this was not his true life, which was, henceforth, 'hid with Christ in God.' Even the company of his fellows was, at times, distasteful, for their objects were other than his; yet he sought to win them over to love 'the Author.' Contemplative life had drawn him and set him apart; but it had also given him his mission. He was to be to others a prophet of the mystic and unseen.

His first impulse had been to win the world to his system through preaching. There are traces of systematic attempts to gain influence over others, although not by forming an order or community; but these ways of influencing others hardly sufficed him, for

<sup>1</sup> This is the date usually accepted, on fair evidence, but a manuscript correction by Henry Bradshaw, in a copy of Forshall and Madden, gives the date as 1348.

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he found few like-minded with himself. It seems not improbable that he even came into collision with ecclesiastical authorities, for he preached as a free lance and from a particular point of view. Unrest, and the friction of awkward personal relations (for he was dependent upon the help of others) worked along with the difficulty of his general position to drive him from place to place. At last, his energy found a new outlet and he began to write. Short ejaculatory poems, then longer and more didactic works, were the natural expressions of his soul—and thus he found his true work in life. He describes the impulses which moved him 'if I might be able in some good way to compose or write something by which the Church of God might grow in divine delight.'

Rolle thus deserves a high place among the many poets of the religious life; and the forms he used, or, at times, elaborated, have a beauty answering to their thought. Intense personal feeling, sympathy and simplicity are their chief features, and thus, apart from their language, they appeal to all ages alike. Beginning with alliteration only, the author worked into rime. But followers, such as William Nassyngton, imitated him in poems hard to distinguish from Rolle's own; some versified editions of his prose works—such as that of the *Form of Living* (or *Mending of Life*)—were probably also due to Nassyngton. We thus come to a cycle of sacred poems, at once mystic and practical, all grouped around Rolle. At first purely local, they spread beyond south Yorkshire; copies were made in southern English, 'translated' (says one MS) 'out of northern tunge into southern, that it schulde be better be understandyn of enen of þe selve countreie.' The *Psalms* had been to Rolle himself a source of inspiration and comfort; he had come to that constant intercourse with God, to that sense of personal touch with Him, in which even their most exalted language did not seem unreal or too remote. He could write: 'grete haboundance of gastly comfort and joy in God comes in the hertes of thaim at says or synges devoutly the psalmes in lovyng of Jesus Crist.' His labour at the *Psalter* had a wide-reaching influence, and appears in many forms; a Latin commentary upon it is one of his most original works; and, in another of them, the Latin version is followed by an English translation, and a commentary; the last has been widely used and highly praised by pious writers of very different schools, but it is really a translation of Peter Lombard's commentary, and is, therefore, devoid of originality and personal touches. This commentary may not have been his only attempt at translation, as the English

version of *The Mirror of St Edmund* may also be his work. His own prose is marked by flexibility and tender feeling fittingly expressed. A metrical *Psalter*—apparently earlier in date—also exists, and this, again, was largely copied, but it cannot be ascribed with absolute certainty to Rolle himself.

From the date of the miracles at Hampole—1381 and thereabouts—a revival of Rolle's fame seems to have taken place, just before the great Peasants' Revolt, and just when Lollard<sup>1</sup> influence was spreading. To this coincidence is due the reissue of the commentary upon the *Psalter* with Lollard interpolations and additions. From various doctrinal inferences the date of this reissue has been tentatively fixed as early as 1378, and its authorship has been sometimes ascribed—although without reason—to Wyclif himself. Against these Lollard interpolations the writer of some verses prefixed to one MS complains:

Copied has this Sauter ben of yvel men of Lollardy,  
And afterward hit has been sene ympe in with erey;  
They seyden then to lowde folos that it shuld be all enter  
A bleasyd boke of hur scoles, of Richard Hampole the Sauter.

The writer of this particular MS claims that his copy, on the other hand, is the same as that kept chained at Hampole itself. The use made of Hampole's *Psalter*, and the quarrel raised over it, illustrate its value. But originality cannot be claimed for it.

Rolle's activity was due to the wish to benefit his fellows, and hence come a number of plain, practical treatises with religious ends in view. His commentary upon the *Psalms* was written for the edification of the same Margaret of Ainderby for whom he wrote, in prose, *The Form of Living*; his beautiful *Ego dormio*

<sup>1</sup> On the continent, the word Lollard was applied to Beghard communities and men of heretical views in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The name was soon given to Wyclif's followers (see *Fasc. Zis.* pp. 800 and 812 for its use opprobriously in 1362): it is then applied to the poor priests. In Wright's *Political Songs*, II, 243—4 we have an allusion to Oldcastle.

The game is noȝt so lolle so hies  
Ther sete failen fondement.

Hit is unkyndly for a kniȝt,  
That shuld a kinges castel kepe  
To babble the Bibel day and niȝt.

Taken along with the gloss to Walsingham (*Hist. Angl.* I, 325) *hi vocabantur a vulgo Lollardi incipientes nudis pedibus, vestiti pannis vilibus, scilicet de russeto*, the word seems specially applied to street-preachers, or idlers in streets (*lollen*, to loll). But the punning association with *lollism*, *lollies*, appears in a song of about the year 1382 (*Pol. Songs*, I, 232), in *homo hujus hortuli* | ... *fecit salsitia*, | *quae suffocant virentia*, | *velut frumentum lollia*, and *Lollardi sunt sisantha*, | *optilae, vepres de lollia*. This fanciful derivation became popular.

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*et cor meum vigilat*; a prose work which shows the influence of those pseudo-Dionysian writings that markedly affected both Grosseteste and Colet, was written for a nun of Yedingham; explanations of the *Canticles*, the Lord's Prayer and Commandments and some prayers in *The Layfolk's Massbook*, had the same object. His mysticism still left something practical in his character—so much so that, at times, he gave advice which, in spite of his assured orthodoxy, must have seemed, to some, unusual. Thus, he speaks of the error of taking too little food, in avoiding too much—and he never tries to impress upon all others the contemplative life he sought for himself. He saw that, for most of them, life must be active; he merely sought to teach them the spirit in which to live.

Of his attitude towards the church little need be said; he is a faithful and loyal son, although he keeps some freedom of speech. In a poem attributed to him, the impersonal *Pricke of Conscience*—a popular summary, in 9824 lines, of current mediæval theology borrowed from Grosseteste and others, strong in its sense of awe and terror of sin, and firm in its application of ecclesiastical rules to the restraint and the pardon of sins—the abuses he condemns most strongly are those of individual licence and social life. If he had any quarrel with the church, it was rather with some of its theologians who did not share his philosophy than with its system or its existing development. When he spoke of God's 'loving-kindness in the gates of the daughter of Zion' he interpreted the gates as being the church, under whose shadow he dwelt.

His doctrine of 'love' was thus not purely mystical or remote from life: it overflowed into teachings of social righteousness, and the dignity of labour as a service before God; it made injustice and offences against love (charity) peculiarly hateful in his eyes. Yet he had no hatred of the rich or of riches, and, indeed, he had, at times, been even blamed for his friendship with the rich; it was merely against the abuse and misuse of riches he protested. Three things he held needful in daily life: that work should be honest without waste of time, that it should be done in freedom of spirit and that a man's whole behaviour should be honest and fair. There was thus in his teaching much that strengthened the democracy of the times, much that condemned the social and ecclesiastical conditions of the day. If, on the one hand, his judgment was *magna igitur est vita solitaria si magnifice agatur*, on the other hand, he realised for himself and taught to others the living power of Christian fellowship. He is as significant in the history of popular mediæval religion as in that of mediæval letters.

Although John Wyclif, like Rolle, was of northern origin, his life belongs altogether to Oxford and to national affairs. His northern background not only gave something to his character but also, probably, determined his career: his family had some connection with Balliol College, and it was the natural college for a Yorkshireman. At Oxford he came under the great influences which shaped himself and his work. But, between him and Rolle there were resemblances apart from the north and Oxford; each of them has a special place in the history of the English Bible as well as of the English tongue, and Biblical commentaries—probably due to Rolle—have been, at one time or another, ascribed to Wyclif. In both cases, assumptions have been made too readily before the existing works had been studied and classified: works such as *The Last Age of the Church* and *An Apology for the Lollards*—which could not possibly have been Wyclif's—have been put down as his. Until the Wyclif Society began its labours, his Latin works were mainly in manuscript, and, before they could be studied and compared with each other, the data for his life and character remained uncertain. Even now, there remain some points which it is wiser to leave open, but we know enough to say that certain traditional views and dates, at any rate, must be cast aside.

John Wyclif was born, according to Leland, at Ipreswel or Hipswell, near Richmond, in Yorkshire. His family took its origin from Wycliffe-on-Tees, and he himself is described in a papal document as of the diocese of York. The date of his birth is uncertain, but it is generally supposed to have been about 1320, and certainly not much later. The tradition which says that he went to Balliol College is probable, for we find him there as its Master in 1360. The university, which gained through papal provision some support for its learned sons, petitioned Urban V to grant Wyclif a canonry with prebend (or parish annexed) in York Minster. As an answer, he was appointed, by papal provision, to the prebend of Aust in the collegiate church of Westbury-on-Trym, in the diocese of Worcester (24 November 1362). And, on 26 December 1373, Gregory XI granted Wyclif leave to hold this prebend of Aust even after he had received a canonry with prebend in Lincoln, which he had been previously promised when a vacancy occurred. In his work *De Civili Dominio*, Wyclif apparently alludes to this latter appointment, and speaks, although without bitterness, of his being afterwards passed over for a young foreigner. Incidentally, it should be noticed that Wyclif was thus, as late as

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1373, in good repute at the Curia ; and, further, when he mentions the matter some years later (probably about 1377) he is not hostile to the pope.

The passage from the ranks of the learners to those of the teachers was better defined in medieval days than it is now, and it is important to know, therefore, that the date of Wyclif's doctorate (S.T.P., D.D. or S.T.M.) can now safely be placed about 1372. He could, after that, lecture upon theology, and, not long after his own day, this promotion was noted as a turning point in his teaching : it was then he was held to have taught at least the beginnings of heresy. Up to this time, his life had been mainly passed at Oxford, as boy (for undergraduates went up at an early age, and much elementary teaching, even in grammar, was given in the university), as pupil and as teacher, in arts before he taught theology. There is no evidence that he had taken much part in parish work, although he had held preferments, and the incidental dates that have come down to us, no less than the Latin writings lately edited, imply great activity in teaching. He would probably 'determine,' and take his Bachelor's degree some four years after matriculation ; in three more years he would take his Master's degree and 'incept' in arts, and, after some thirteen years more, in two stages, he could take his Doctor's degree and 'incept' in divinity. But, these periods might, of course, be prolonged in special cases ; all the Fellows of Balliol, for instance, except six theological Fellows, were, until 1364, prohibited from graduating in theology ; and, from some cause of this kind, Wyclif was, apparently, delayed in reaching his Doctor's degree. But his reputation as a lecturer had been made some years before ; Masters of arts lectured to students specially under their care, while, just before his doctorate, a Bachelor of divinity could lecture upon 'the sentences.'

It is difficult for us to understand, not, indeed, the intellectual eagerness of the university, but its hold upon the country at large. From all parts of England, and from foreign countries too, youths were flocking to Oxford, where a new intellectual world opened itself to them. The fact that medieval thought and enquiry followed paths differing greatly from those we tread to-day sometimes hides from us the value of their intellectual training. Their material was, of course, limited, although not so limited as is sometimes thought : thus, although Wyclif, for instance, knew nothing of Greek beyond a few names and words, he had studied widely in natural science, of which Roger Bacon had left a tradition at Oxford. Their method had been originally formed to train the mind, in which

it had once succeeded. By Wyclif's day, however, it had become too technical, and, far from helping thought, the scholastic method had become a cumbrous routine under which thought was cramped. The weight of the authorities whom he was expected to know, the knowledge which he had to accumulate, and the order in which his thoughts had to be arranged, checked a scholar's originality. Thus, the first reading of Wyclif's Latin works does not give one any idea of his mental vigour, for the thought has to be sifted out from under appeals to authorities and cumbrous apparatus. When that has been done, it is found, as a rule, that the thought is strong, tenaciously held and fearlessly applied. But, even then, we of to-day can hardly feel the power of Wyclif's personality. It was different in his own time, for these things were the medium through which minds influenced each other.

It is easy for us to understand the influence of Wyclif's English writings, and we are even likely to exaggerate it, but not so with his Latin works. In their case, we have to make the allowances spoken of above, and to remember, moreover, that, in the fourteenth century, men were almost ceasing to think in Latin; with Wyclif himself, the turn of expression, even in his Latin works, is English. It was not surprising, then, that even a scholar trained, as he had been, to regard Latin as the proper vehicle of deeper thought, should, in the end, turn from it to English; the old literary commonwealth of the Middle Ages was breaking up, to be replaced by a number of nations with separate ways of thought and a literature of their own. Wyclif's free use of English is, therefore, significant. In his double aspect, as standing at the close of a long series of Latin writers, and as an English writer early in the file, he belongs partly to the age that was going out, partly to the age that was coming in. But it would be a mistake to think that his democratic, popular impulses, shown by his choice of English and his appeal to a larger public, came to him solely from the national side. The modern conception of a scholar standing apart from the world, of a university professor working within a small circle and influencing a few select pupils, must be cast aside. For no place was more democratic than a medieval university: thither all classes came, and the ideas which were born in a lecture-room soon passed, as we have seen in the case of Rolle, to the distant villages of the north. When Wyclif threw himself upon a wider public than that of the university, he was, after all, only carrying a little further that desire to popularise knowledge and thought which was common to all medieval teachers. The habit of thinking

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in Latin, the necessity of writing in Latin, had been almost the only barriers to hinder any previous thinker from doing what Wyclif afterwards did. For him, those barriers hardly existed, and, hence, the passage from his lecture-room to the field of the nation was not so strange as it seems to us. The same impulses worked in both phases of his life; the great formative influences of his life were scholastic and academic, but this does not imply any isolation or intellectual aristocracy.

There were many great schoolmen whose works were known to him and to whom he owed his really great learning, but a few had specially influenced him. He belonged, like other great Englishmen, to the realists, who attributed to general ideas a real existence, and who were in the closest intellectual sympathy with the great fathers of the church, St Augustine above all others. The strife between them and the nominalists was bitter and prolonged, but, towards the close of the Middle Ages, the latter were victorious, and became, together with those who, as conceptualists, held their opinions in a slightly modified form, the prevalent school. Realism went out of fashion, and realists, Wyclif among them, were forgotten. To this cause, nearly as much as to the taint of heresy, was due the neglect into which he fell. But, at Oxford, in his day, the realists championed by Wyclif more than held their own. But for one nominalist, William of Ockham—the great Franciscan writer and advocate of the rights of the state—Wyclif had a great regard, and he refused to count him a heretic. Ockham had been a warm defender of the Franciscan doctrine of poverty—a doctrine which had a special charm for Wyclif—and, from it as a basis, had gone on to attack the existing constitution and power of the church. Wyclif, who, in his later years, followed the same course and took up the same position, owed him a certain intellectual debt.

But he owed even more to Grosseteste—'archi-doctor,' 'Lincolniensis,' as he called him, and to Richard FitzRalph, 'Armaghanus,' archbishop of Armagh (1347–60). With the former, who had greatly influenced Oxford, Wyclif was in general philosophical agreement, and from him, possibly, learnt his great love of the Scriptures. From FitzRalph, who was chancellor of Oxford (1333), Wyclif drew the doctrine of dominion or lordship, to which, although carrying it somewhat further, he really added nothing. FitzRalph had reached his views through the controversy with the mendicants; he had come across them at Oxford; he knew the charges brought against them of enticing

youngsters to join them; later, on his return from Ireland (1356), he found the controversy between them and the seculars peculiarly keen; he preached against them in London, and, afterwards, at Avignon (1357), he delivered his famous *Defensio Curatorum* on behalf of parish priests who suffered much from their encroachments. His *De Pauperie Salvatoris* not only dealt with the poverty of Christ (which, as he pointed out, was not mendicancy) but discussed 'lordship' and 'use.' In the end he made all 'lordship' depend on that of God, to whom all lordship belonged; man had once received as a loan from God an original lordship for himself; but this he had lost through sin, and a new relation had begun. There is, thus, a distinction between the lordship of the ideal state of innocency, and the conditional lordship found in the actual world. Only in so far as man serves God does he approach true lordship; so far as he is sinful, he forfeits his lordship. To use Wyclif's expression 'dominion is founded in grace,' and, as a consequence, a man in mortal sin cannot exercise lordship. But Wyclif did not follow FitzRalph blindly; for, while FitzRalph had gone on to condemn the poverty of the mendicant friars, Wyclif, until his last years, sympathised with the Franciscans, whose model his own 'poor priests' in some ways reproduced.

But this doctrine of dominion, excellently as it enforced responsibility towards God, was capable of much abuse. FitzRalph had carefully guarded it as an ideal, and his discussion of the civil state and property had moved in a different plane from that of his ideal conditions. But, as so often happens between a master and a scholar, Wyclif the scholar reproduces his master's outline in deeper colours and without the shades; hence, it was not always easy to see that his arguments applied merely to an ideal society. If his teaching was charged with favouring the Peasants' Revolt, and if, later, Lollards appeared to society as socialists, it was, largely, owing to Wyclif's unguarded expression of this doctrine of FitzRalph.

Wyclif's earliest writings are of a purely philosophical nature, and, of course, academic in origin and style. *De Logica*, *De Ente Predicamentali*, *De Materia et Forma*, *De Benedicta Incarnatione* and *De Compositione Hominis* are ordinary university lectures: in the case of the last it is probable that we have only the lecture-notes as they were delivered. They may be dated—not, of course, with certainty—from 1360 to 1370 or thereabouts. They give us Wyclif's philosophical basis, and show him as a follower

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of St Augustine, named after his master, 'Joannes Augustini.' Hence, also, came his views on predestination, upon which he had a friendly controversy with the logician Ralph Strode: his doctrine of the *presciti* (foreknown) remained unchanged throughout his life. Already, too, he denied the possibility of the annihilation of anything, a view which led him to his later denial of transubstantiation. His Latin works show how large a part these discussions, which both influenced others and gained him a great reputation in controversy, played in his life, and his chief opponents, with the exception of Wadford or Wodeford (probably a Franciscan), were monks. The abbot of Chertsey, for instance, came up to Oxford to draw him into a discussion, and many other opponents attacked him. Through these controversies, Wyclif's views, as to the wrongfulness of endowments (to which he ascribed all the evils of the church), as to the duty of the state and of lay authorities to enforce reformation by seizing church property, must have become widely known. But, probably, he had not yet made his entry into political life, and, certainly, he had not as yet any controversy with the mendicants. It is probable that Wyclif's *Determinatio*, printed by Lewis, containing a supposed account of a parliamentary debate upon papal taxation, belongs (as Loserth has pointed out) not to 1366—7 but to a date some ten years later. At the former date, it stands isolated in Wyclif's life; at the later date, it finds a fitting place in the controversy recounted in *De Civili Dominio* and *De Ecclesia*; the papal demand made upon England in 1366 was repeated in 1374, so that we are not restricted to the earlier date alone. Before 1374, also, great debates had taken place upon the taxation of the church for national needs, while the employment of churchmen in high secular offices—a question which caused the main struggle about the time, 1376—7, of the Good parliament—had been opposed by a strong court party since 1371. This 'lay-party' wished to lessen the power of ecclesiastics, and resented their appearance in politics. Hence, they welcomed Wyclif's attack on endowments. Wyclif's visit to Bruges (July 1374), as member of an embassy to discuss papal provisions, might deepen his interest in these questions.

A new parliament met 27 January 1377 and convocation assembled a little later (3 February). Wyclif, who had been asked up to London (22 September 1376) to help John of Gaunt and his party by his sermons, was now called before convocation to answer for his views, but what the charges against him were we can only

infer from his writings: they probably arose out of his views as to ecclesiastical endowments. He appeared in his defence accompanied by John of Gaunt and Lord Percy, together with four mendicant friars. A quarrel between Courtenay, bishop of London, and John of Gaunt broke out, which led to a popular riot against the duke; and the proceedings against Wyclif were thus interrupted. But bulls—five in number—were now got from Rome against him: three were addressed to the archbishop of Canterbury, one to the king and one to the university of Oxford. Much discussion has arisen as to the originators of this attack. It was, largely, the result of the Oxford controversies, and was led by the monks; but some among the bishops—especially Brunton, bishop of Rochester—may have worked along with them; political dislikes embittered the controversy; and one reason why his enemies raised these controversies against him was, says Wyclif, their wish to get him deprived of his benefices. Eighteen errors were charged against him which centred in his views on endowments, but his assertions that the church in its censures and excommunications should conform to the law of Christ, and that churchmen should be subject to civil jurisdiction, were also brought against him. The complaints were thus concerned with the organisation and outside relations of the church rather than with its doctrines.

Both the young king Richard II and the parliament seemed to support him; and he now speaks of himself as *peculiaris clericus* of the king; he was consulted as to the action of parliament (which met 13 October 1377) with regard to the drain of money to Rome, and he also defended himself in a document addressed to parliament. Bishop Brunton had spoken in parliament, as early as February or March, of the expected bulls: they were dated 22 May 1377, but it was not until 18 December 1377 that the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London—as commissioners appointed by the pope—began to move by requesting the university to enquire into the charges. The university resented the tone of the pope's bull to them, which had reproved their laxity in admitting heresy, and it was not thought lawful for the pope to order the imprisonment of anyone in England. But the archbishop's request to examine the truth of the charges was another matter. They made the investigation, during which they confined Wyclif to his rooms, and their verdict was that the doctrines, although capable of a bad construction, were not heterodox.

But Wyclif was further summoned before the two prelates at Lambeth—probably in February or March 1378. He had

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drawn up a defence of himself for transmission to the pope, which was sent through the hands of the bishops, and was also widely circulated in England, doubtless through the 'poor priests.' Once again, the proceedings were interrupted: a message from the princess of Wales stayed the trial, and the fickle and turbulent Londoners broke into the hall, this time on the side of Wyclif, and not on that of their bishop as before. He was, however, directed not to preach or teach the doctrines charged against him, which, although not judged erroneous, were likely to cause trouble. It is possible that the changed attitude of the Londoners was due to Wyclif's preaching among them, and, as a matter of fact, he did not obey the command of silence. In more ways than one, this year (1378) was a turning point in his life, and one of his larger Latin works, *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, written at this very time, gives us unusual insight into his mind and feelings.

The election of Urban VI (7 April 1378) was followed (September 1378) by that of an anti-pope, Clement VII, and thus the barely ended sojourn at Avignon gave place to an even more disastrous schism. England supported Urban, and Wyclif, for a time, was loyal to him. But the many admitted ecclesiastical abuses, which others, besides Wyclif, freely pointed out, naturally grew greater during the schism, and the rivalry of two popes led to a wider discussion of ecclesiastical questions. The bishop of Norwich (Henry le Spenser) actually undertook (1382) the leadership of a crusade in Flanders proclaimed by Urban against Clement; indulgences were issued to all who shared in it; friars were specially active in furthering it, and the archbishop of Canterbury (Courtenay had now succeeded the murdered Sudbury) ordered prayers and a general collection for the expedition (April 1383). It is clear, both from Wyclif's Latin works (such as *Cruciata*) and from his English tracts, that the crusade, with its mingling of unchristian warfare, a keen struggle for power, the pursuit of wealth and the abuses of indulgences, turned him more strongly against the papacy. Henceforth, there was no reserve in his language, no moderation in his views: he regarded the pope as anti-Christ. But, by anti-Christ, Wyclif hardly meant the same that the prophetic school of later theologians mean. Anything, opposed to the law of Christ was anti-christian, and, so far as he broke the law of Christ, a man might be anti-Christ; to be anti-Christ was thus, with Wyclif, a phase of character, and not a personal existence. Before 1378, he had used the expression of, isolated acts, but,

later, he came to hold the pope (though not the papacy) consistently and always anti-Christ. He no longer confined himself to the criticism of abuses; he questioned, at one time or another, the utility of every part of the church's system: sacraments, holy orders, everything was unessential. Far as this criticism went, it is probable that in it, and in the growing stress laid on preaching as the one essential of religion, lie Wyclif's chief affinities with later reformers. So strongly did he feel about the Schism and this crusade that the occurrence or omission of any reference to either is an accepted test of date for his works.

Wyclif's liking for the friars and their fundamental doctrine of poverty has already been mentioned. But he had also sympathy with their popular work, even if he thought it sometimes neglected or badly done. This feeling led him to institute his 'poor priests,' who must have begun their work while he was still at Oxford, probably about 1377, as they are certainly mentioned in works of 1378. Originally, they were priests living in poverty and journeying about the country, clad in simple russet, preaching as the Dominicans had done; later, some, if not most, of them were laymen; gradually, too, as his quarrel with the church authorities grew and he became estranged from his university, he demanded less learning from his poor priests; simple piety, a love of the Scriptures and a readiness to preach were all he asked from them. One unlearned man (*unus ydiota*) might, by God's grace, do more than many graduates in schools or colleges. There was nothing strange in the original idea of such a body, and it was only by an accident that Wyclif did not become the founder of a new order of friars. Before the end of his life they had spread his doctrines widely, and had met with great success, especially in the vast diocese of Lincoln, and in those of Norwich and Worcester. The districts which were centres of his teaching long remained centres of Lollardy, although the views of the later Lollards can hardly be held the same as his. For they changed his views upon property into a socialism discontented with existing government and the distribution of wealth; his denunciation of evils, which grew gradually more sweeping and subversive of ecclesiastical order, became, with them, a hatred of the whole church; his love of the Bible, and his appeal to it as the test of everything, too often became, with them, a disregard of everything but the Bible; his denial of transubstantiation, based upon philosophical reasoning, became, with them, a contempt for the Sacrament itself.

So far, we have seen Wyclif mainly critical and even destructive.

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But there was also a strongly positive side to his teaching: his regard for the Scriptures and his frequent use of them in his writings (common with medieval writers, but very common with him) is best seen in his work *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, which he was writing about 1378. He regarded Scripture as the test of everything, in comparison with which tradition had no force. It is impossible to trace fully the development of his views, but the medieval love of speculation and freedom of thought (which was not, as a rule, interfered with, unless it led to revolutionary action) carried him far: there is hardly anything in the constitution or worship or doctrine of the church which, in some of his latest works, was not questioned. Nevertheless, after leaving Oxford, he remained quietly working in his parish, following the ordinary round of a parish priest. It is to be noted, too, that in his English sermons he faithfully follows the church's choice of Epistles and Gospels, not casting it aside as did some later reformers. But the inconsistency between his life and his words is more apparent than real; the habit of hypothesis, of questioning, of making assumptions, was so ingrained in him that too much weight must not be assigned to all his statements, as if they expressed a deliberate and well-formed conviction. The world at large was, however, different from an academic audience, and many whom his works reached must have drawn practical inferences from them which Wyclif himself never drew. Still, as regards the church—poisoned as he held it to be by the endowments poured into its system first by Constantine and, since then, by others—his mental attitude was distinctly sceptical. His positive appeal to Scripture, however, was another thing; it was directed against the abuses of the time. But, among his opponents, men like bishop Brunton of Rochester also had a deep love for the Scriptures; the language often used as to ignorance or dislike of the Bible at the time is much exaggerated and mistaken, as the works of Rolle indicate. Nevertheless, there were some opponents of Wyclif whom he charged rightly with belittling the Scriptures. These criticisms were directed against the growing school of nominalists against whom Wyclif, as one of the latest medieval realists, fought vigorously, and whose influence had, in the end, the evil effects of which Wyclif complained.

It was this appeal to the Scriptures that gained Wyclif his name of *Doctor Evangelicus*. In the Bible he found a source of spiritual strength, an inspiration of moral energy as well as a guide to conduct. For these reasons he wished to spread its

use. He pointed to other nations with translations of it in their own tongue and asked why England should not have the same: the faith should be known to all in the language most familiar to them. The same impulses that led him to found his poor priests made him wish to spread a knowledge of the Bible in England.

But in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, while there are already complaints that preaching is interfered with, there are no complaints that the Bible in the vernacular is prohibited: indeed, the history of the English translations before Wyclif show that such was not the case. We have already seen in the case of Rolle how translations were made for dwellers in religious houses; one of the independent versions—edited by Miss Paues—has an interesting prologue in which a ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ ‘lêwed and unkunynge’ ask a more learned ‘brother’ to teach them: ‘I preye you pur charite to techen us lewed men trewlyche þe soþe astur oure axynge.’ The reply is ‘Broþer, y knowe wel þat y am hokle by Cristis lawe to parfome þyn axynge: bote napeles we beþ now so fer y-fallen awëy from Cristis lawe, þat jif I wolde answer to þyn axynge I mōste in cas underfonge þe dep.’ The translation of the Bible into English was not prohibited, but the use now made of it was leading to a claim for stricter control. Much controversy, however, has arisen lately as to the share of Wyclif in the versions which go by his name. We have express statements by the chronicler Knighton—nearly contemporary and also anti-Wyclifite—and Hug—a little later (1411)—that Wyclif had translated the whole Bible into English. Archbishop Arundel, in a letter to the pope asking for Wyclif’s condemnation, speaks (1412) of Wyclif having filled up the measure of his malice by the design to render the Scriptures into English; and a general tradition, the value of which may be much or little, confirms this statement. There are two ‘Wyclifite’ versions: one, a little earlier than the other, stiffer and inferior in style, closely following the Vulgate, from which both translations were made without the use of Greek. The prologues, some for the whole work, and some for commentaries upon individual books, are certainly Wyclifite in tone, although none of them can be assigned to Wyclif himself; specially important is the general prologue to the second version, giving an account of the writer’s method of work; and the writer of this was certainly a Wyclifite. On the other hand, we have the curious fact that Wyclif himself never uses the translation that goes by his name, but gives an independent translation from

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the Vulgate. Too much, however, should not be made of this, for, no doubt, Wyclif knew the Latin better than the English, and he would, therefore, translate incidentally and afresh instead of referring to a manuscript: in acting thus he would be only following the usual course. More importance, however, belongs to a statement, made independently by Foxe and Sir Thomas More (in his *Dialogue*), that there were translations dating before Wyclif; to which the latter adds that the whole Bible had been then translated by 'virtuous and well-learned men.' The whole question has been complicated by over-inference from actual statements on either side, by the ascription of everything Wyclifite to Wyclif himself, and by confusing two matters quite distinct—the existence of English translations and their permission or condemnation by the church.

We cannot cast aside the express association of a translation with the name of Wyclif; his own works and feelings make such a translation probable, although they give us no express evidence. As to the part he himself took in it, nothing is known, although very definite statements are sometimes made. There were already in circulation many copies of isolated books of the Bible, and the whole of the New Testament could be read in English translations which had been made mainly for the inmates of monastic houses, especially for nuns; the impulses which had produced these copies had been felt more in the north and the midlands than in the south, where French was understood and used down to a later date. Some of these earlier works, which prepared the way, may have been used by the Wyclifite translators; among them are translations, such as one of the Apocalypse, and an English version (with preface) of the Latin *Harmony of the Gospels* by Clement of Llanthony, wrongly ascribed to Wyclif himself. But the Wyclifite versions were due to a more general impulse and were meant for a wider public. Their literary history needs much further study, and when criticism, textual and linguistic, has been further applied, some more certain conclusions may be drawn. But it does not appear likely that the statements made here will be largely affected.

As to Wyclif's fellow-workers, not very much is known. The names of two have come down to us—Nicholas Hereford and John Purvey. The former had worked with Wyclif at Oxford and is spoken of by the mendicants at Oxford in an appeal to John of Gaunt (18 February 1382) as their chief enemy; he was then a Doctor, *paginae sacrae professor, et utinam non perversor*, words

which may refer to his share in the translation. One of the manuscripts directly attributes the translation to Hereford, and the fact that it breaks off suddenly at *Baruch* iii, 20 implies a sudden interruption. Owing to tumults in the university, which had arisen out of his sermons (1381—2), he was summoned to appear in London, and was there excommunicated (1 July 1382). He appealed to Rome and went thither only to be imprisoned. Wyclif, in his *Opus Evangelicum*, which he was writing at his death, speaks indignantly of this imprisonment. In 1385, he escaped, and, in 1387, was back again in England: we find him, with Purvey and others, prohibited by the bishop of Worcester from preaching in his diocese. In 1391, he was promised protection by the king, and, in 1394, he became chancellor of Hereford, but, in 1417, he retired to be a Carthusian monk at Coventry.

So far as language is concerned, the revision ascribed to Purvey deserves higher praise than the first translation. John Purvey was born at Lathbury, near Newport Pagnell. In 1387, with Hereford, Aston, Parker and Swynderby, he was inhibited from preaching by the bishop of Worcester; they were said to be leagued together in a certain college unlicensed and disallowed by law. He submitted and recanted his errors on 6 March 1401, and, in August of that year, became vicar of West Hythe, Kent; he held this post for two years, but, in 1421, we again find him in prison. He was the author of *Regimen Ecclesiae*, a work from which Richard Lavenham (1396) collected his errors. In his prologue to the Bible, he describes the method which he, 'a poor catiff lettid fro prechyng,' took for finding out the exact meaning and faithfully rendering it with 'myche travile, with diverse felawis and helperis.' But his work was far more than that of a mere scholar: he understands (and expresses in words that remind us of Coleridge) how a labourer at Scripture hath 'nede to live a clene lif, and be ful devout in preiers, and have not his wit occupied about worldli thingis'; only 'with good livyng and greet treveil' could men come to 'trewe understanding of holi writ.' The comparisons so often drawn between these two revisions make clear the superiority, in idiom and all that makes a language, of Purvey's revision. The earlier, ascribed partly to Wyclif, is the roughest of renderings, and its English is unlike that of Wyclif's sermons, which may, however, have undergone revision. But it must be repeated that the history of these early translations has yet to be deciphered and written; the literary tendencies of the Middle Ages, spoken of before, have thoroughly hidden from us the workers and much of

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their work. We can say that Wyclif, as the centre of the movement, was, probably, the source of its energy; more, we cannot assert as yet. It is likely that, when this history is made out, the importance of pre-Wyclifite translations, fragmentary and incomplete, will appear greater. It is also likely that we shall be led to assign less to individual labourers and more to successive labours of schools of writers. But the name of Wyclif will probably still be left in its old connection even if his individual share be uncertain or lessened.

This translation can claim to be the first complete rendering of the Bible into English; but it is quite possible that its effect upon the language has been sometimes over-estimated. The reason for this lies in its history and in the history of Wyclifism. For some years after 1381 or so, there is no hint of any hostility to the Scriptures on the part of ecclesiastical rulers; it is only Lollard preaching that is checked. The translation of Purvey is so far free from having any bias, that it has lately been even claimed for an authorised translation; MSS of it were certainly owned by obedient churchmen and by bishops themselves. Purvey does add a few simple glosses, but they are free from any party colour and are taken from Nicholas de Lyra (1340). His version seems to have superseded others, even the Vulgate itself; Henry Bradshaw stated that he had not come across a single Latin MS copied after its appearance. The question of prologues was, a different matter; a Lollard prologue was often added to anything, as, for instance, to works of Rothe. But the church was not hostile to the translations themselves, nor did it forbid their being made. Lyndwood and Sir Thomas More both spoke to the fact that translations made before Wyclif were not prohibited nor forbidden to be read. Cranmer also said that 'if the matter should be tried by custom, we might also allege custom for the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue'. For it is not much above one hundred years ago, since Scripture hath not been accustomed to be read in the vulgar tongue within the realm.' Archbishop Arundel himself praised queen Anne of Bohemia because of her love towards the Bible and her study of it, exceeding that of some prelates. The Wyclifite version did not become the property of a mere section of the people, such as the Lollards were. Possession of a copy of it, however, by a person not under religious vows, needed an ecclesiastical licence, which was freely granted. But the changed attitude of the church—the way in which it laid stress upon its right of controlling the reading of

vernacular translations and was led to regard popular literature, when likely to supersede its own teaching, with suspicion—was due to the history of Lollardy.

• The church, which had been so long the guardian of unity, found itself confronted by forces forming nations and tending to disruptions. To control and guide these forces would have been a noble work, but it was a work of supreme difficulty, not to be wrought by short-sighted or selfish men. To begin with, the church which recognised its duty of teaching the nation should have brought out an authorised version of its own. • There is no proof that it ever tried to do this on a complete scale; it was, indeed, content to use the Wyclifite versions, as it well might be, until the growth of Lollard prologues and commentaries made it suspicious. Thus, some of the Wyclifite MSS have the tables of lessons added, and some smaller MSS contain the Gospels and Epistles alone. The claim made by the Lollards that 'eche lewed man that schul be saved is a real priest mand of God' tended to weaken the power of the church, its power for good as well as for evil, and, naturally, made 'worldly clerkis crien that holy writ in Engliche wole make cristen men at debate, and suggetis to rebelle against her sovereyns and therefor' ought not to be 'suffred among lewed men.' Medieval notions of freedom differed from our own, and, as a rule, freedom to do any special work was held to belong only to a corporation licensed for the purpose.

• The danger of popular excitement was made pressing by the Peasants' Revolt. The appeal to a democratic public, the recognition of the simple layman's place in the church, the crusade against endowments and the growing criticism of ecclesiastical institutions, worked along with other causes of the rebellion, while Wyclif's exaltation of the power of king and state was lost sight of. His own sympathies, indeed, went strongly with the rebels. His 'poor priests' were charged with having incited to revolt, and Nicholas Hereford hurled back the charge at the friars. Friars and 'poor priests' were both parts of the large floating population which was all in a ferment, and there was probably some truth in the charges on both sides. If John Ball's confession that he had learnt his views from Wyclif be somewhat suspicious, it should still be remembered that Wyclif's revolutionary views on endowments had been before the world for some years. Both in Ball's confession and in a popular poem of the day, Wyclif's attack upon the doctrine of transubstantiation was connected with the general excitement. That attack stirred up many animosities new and

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old ; it was the result of a gradual development of Wyclif's views, and it had important historical results.

There are three stages in Wyclif's views upon the Eucharist. First, a stage in which he accepts the current doctrine of transubstantiation, but holds it to be an exception to his other doctrine of the permanence and indestructibility of matter. This stage lasted until about 1370. But in *De Benedicta Incarnacione* (written before his doctorate in 1372) he is wavering as to what the changed substance is, and is inclined to leave the question aside as unnecessary to a simple 'pilgrim.' This being his position, he is not inclined to discuss the question overmuch. But when, about 1380 or so, he had reached a positive opinion, and maintained that the substance of bread remained, he felt bound to teach this, as he held, vital doctrine. Hence, this final stage is marked by great energy of utterance, and continual reference to the question. But the result of his latest view of the Eucharist, taught with much insistence and gradually made the centre of his system, was a controversy, in which he was opposed not only by his former enemies the monks, but by secular priests, and, lastly, by friars. With these last he had, indeed, been gradually breaking friendship ; it had seemed to him that some of them, bound as they were to poverty, must sympathise with him and must, therefore, join him. In his disappointment he began to regard their law of life as hostile, like the law of monasticism, to the law of Christ ; in his latest works, therefore, the friars are attacked with much bitterness. They, concerned, on their part, for their whole position, and, also, passionately believing in the central doctrine he now attacked, replied with equal vigour. His followers, too, who, possibly, may have hastened the quarrel, took their part in the strife. Hence, his teaching on this point seemed to overshadow all his other views. Thus, his system, as it was handed down to later years, attacked the papacy, the organisation of the church, monks and friars and overthrew the popular conception of the Mass. His positive teaching was forgotten ; his followers kept merely to his love of the Scriptures and found practically no place for church organisation, for sacraments or rites ; prayer, preaching and the reading of the Scriptures summed up, for them, the conception of the Christian faith.

An assembly of bishops and ecclesiastics was held at Blackfriars on 17 May, 1382. The council, which was afterwards called 'the earthquake council' from its being interrupted in its session with 'earthdyn,' condemned some doctrines of Wyclif. He him-

self was not named in the decrees issued, but the bishops were to excommunicate any one preaching the condemned doctrines, the university was to prohibit their setting forth and the company of those offending was to be avoided, under pain of excommunication. After much discussion at Oxford, Wyclif was attacked, and, like his supporters, was suspended from all scholastic duties, by an order which was afterwards repeated by the king. But, of his later life, and of the result of the proceedings against him, we know little or nothing. A passage in his *Triologus* seems to imply that he was bound by some promise not to use certain terms—i.e. substance of bread and wine—outside the schools. It was supposed, at one time, that he, like his leading Oxford followers, had recanted, but of this there seems no evidence. Just before the earthquake council, he had presented a very bold defence of his views to parliament, demanding not only freedom for his opinions but their enforcement in practice. His boldness did not leave him, but his influence in Oxford was at an end, and he lived for the rest of his days at Lutterworth.

The sum of his work, Latin and English, in these last two years (1382—4) is enormous, but there are traces of his utilising former lectures ready to hand. To this time most of his undoubted English writings belong, as does the *Triologus*<sup>1</sup> in Latin, perhaps the best known and most connected, although not most interesting, statement of his views. His struggle with the mendicants who opposed him was now at its height, and his language was unmeasured; we must suppose that much of what he said was put forth without due consideration of possible dangers from its being misunderstood. But, in some of his later Latin works—especially his *Opus Evangelicum*—notes of a growing calmness of mind may also be heard beneath the controversies. He had always been inspired by the warmest national feeling, and it was not at all strange that he should, therefore, address the nation as he did; it is this consciousness of the wide audience to whom he was speaking that made his English writings distinctly different from any that had

<sup>1</sup> Wyclif used the form of dialogue also in the *Dialogus* (1879) between *Veritas*, standing for Christ, and *Mendacium*, standing for Satan. But soon all characterisation is lost, and Wyclif himself speaks throughout, the replies of *Mendacium* being short and unworthy of his reputation. In *Triologus* (about 1382) the form is handled better; the characters are: *Altitia*, *solidus philosophus*—Philosophy; *Pneustia*, a captious infidel—Unbelief; and *Phronesis*, *subtilis theologus*—Theology; the first lays down a proposition, to which the second objects, and, at length, the third sums up. But *Pneustia* holds long silence, during which *Altitia* and *Phronesis* speak as enquiring disciple and master. It may be noted that dialogue is also used in the prologue and text of *A Fourteenth-Century Biblical Version* (Miss Paves).

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gone before. The nation that had proved its unity in the battle-field and in parliament was now, we may say for the first time, addressed as one body in popular literature. Neither in style nor in power, however, have his English works any special note of distinction. The style of his sermons ranks higher than the early version of the New Testament, commonly ascribed to him, and it would not be surprising to find that, like many other medieval works, they had undergone some revision by a faithful disciple. In these English works there is a strange mingling of simple directness and ruggedness; their true significance lies in their instinctive feeling for their large audience. Wyclif had proved his power over an academic world, democratic in itself, and so he easily passed to a more democratic public still; his conception of the state, and his experience of parliament, gave a peculiar vividness to the manner of his address, but an even higher quality gave it spiritual force.

For Wyclif had an intense reverence for the Incarnate Christ, *communis homo, unicus homo*. His realist mind made him unite Christ, as the type, with all Christian men. A like belief, worked out in practice, had been the strength of the early Franciscans, and hence had come Wyclif's original sympathy with them. In his later years, after he had parted from them, the same belief was the real basis of his popular appeal, and it was also connected with another characteristic of his last phase. After he had left Oxford, and the university had drifted, although reluctantly, away from his teaching, he came to undervalue learning; the simple, 'lewd' man, if a follower of Christ, could do all the educated man might do. This side of his teaching, which would naturally be exaggerated by the later Lollards, had a real theological basis in his intense desire to see the Christ in every man; an idea which, taught (1370—2) in *De Benedicte Incarnatione*, links together his earlier and later writings.

If we accept, as we probably should, the story told (1441) by John Horn, Wyclif's helper at Lutterworth, to Gascoigne, it is easier to understand his life after 1382. According to Horn, he was paralysed for his last two years, and this explains much. Silence had been enjoined upon him, and silence he had to keep; he was cited to Rome (this can be no longer doubted) and he could but refuse to go; he was *debilis* and *claudus*, the *Rex regum* had forbidden him to travel. He could still work at his writings without openly disobeying the order to be silent; and his 'poor priests' gave him a ready means of scattering them.

When we read in notes to some of the MSS of his works how they were copied in English villages by Bohemian scholars, as they moved from Oxford, to Braybrook, near Leicester, and then to Kemerton, near Evesham, places where Lollard influence was strong, it is easy to see how the crusade was carried on. But, with the growing severity of the persecution under the Lancaster kings, the whole Lollard movement was, as Erasmus says, 'suppressed but not extinguished.' 'It was,' as Gairdner has told us 'by no means an innocent attempt to secure freedom for the individual judgments; it was a spirit that prompted the violation of order and disrespect to all authority.' It left behind it much discontent, an appeal to the Scriptures and to them alone and an exaltation of preaching above aught else; these traditions lingered on, especially in a few local centres, until Tudor days. But Wyclif himself was almost hidden by the loosely organised sect that claimed descent from him.

It is easy to understand why, under the circumstances, nothing more came of Wyclif's citation to Rome. Thus, the scholar, unexcommunicated, although, perhaps, bound by some promise, his feeble body consumed by this restless fire within, lived on in his quiet parish. Upon Holy Innocents' Day, 1384, the final stroke fell on him as he was hearing Mass, and, on St Sylvester's Day (31 December), he died. It is well known how his ashes were treated; but the scanty remembrance of him left in England, contrasted with the activity of the Lollards, was, perhaps, more of a slight to his memory. At Oxford, few traces of his work were left. The university, although not without difficulty, was brought by archbishop Arundel under strict control, and, with the loss of its freedom, and the decay of the realist philosophy for which it had stood, Oxford lost much of its hold upon the nation: controversies such as Wyclif and his followers had raised destroy the atmosphere needed for study and intellectual life. It has been suggested that, owing to the decay of Oxford, Cambridge took its place; such was certainly the result, although positive, as well as negative, reasons might be given for the growing reputation of the younger university.

Meanwhile, the suppressed activity of the Lollards lived on. The archbishop had used the ordinary episcopal powers of inquisition for heresy, which, in England, were never superseded by the inquisition, so that the earlier punishments of heresy by death took place under canon law. But, with the act *De Haeretico Comburendo* (1401), a new basis was given to the persecution, and

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the state, as usual, showed itself more severe than the church. The Lollard party in parliament was, at one time, strong, and, more than once, brought forward suggestions of sweeping changes and confiscation. But, with the condemnation for heresy of Sir John Oldcastle (Lord Cobham, by marriage) in 1413, it ceased to be coherent and effective. Oldcastle himself escaped, after a severe examination, and, until his execution for treason (1417), was a centre for disaffection and rumours of rebellion. Much popular ridicule, such as may be read in the political poems of the day, was thrown upon him, and some of it, by a curious change, was transferred to the Norfolk soldier Sir John Fastolf. The chief result of Oldcastle's life was, thus, a strangely confused impression upon literature, but his Lollardism had been driven back by Arundel's strong action and the wider sweep of domestic politics into the lowlier paths of the national life. The old centres of Lollardy, nevertheless, remained; the activity of Lollard writers, in adding prologues to works already known and in copying or abridging them, went on. The work of Lollard schools, and the circulation of Lollard tracts—for the most part of little merit—had yet both a religious and a literary significance. They come mostly before us in trials, and isolated examples (such as the appeal to parliament in 1395, which, in its English dress, presented, in many slightly varying forms, originals possibly first composed in Latin); but a literature of this kind has often more effect than more ambitious and larger works. There always had been, before the days of Wyclif, this literature of lowly discontent. If, after his days, it was raised to rather a higher level, for a time a little invigorated, and nourished by vague memories, it had, nevertheless, no very precise connection with his teaching. The religious literature of discontent lived on side by side with the more recognised literature of devotion. Tracts and sermons, handed about and read, as treasured teachings to little gatherings, loosely copied and at times condensed, are difficult to classify, or to appreciate. But the exact relation of the later Lollard sect to Wyclif's doctrines, and its influence upon the reformation, are difficult and distinct historical problems. It is certain that, while like him in denying transubstantiation, the later Lollards were not like him in their positive view of the Eucharist; his views upon endowment might reappear again and again in parliament, but had no permanent effect. If there was much floating discontent with the church, and still more with the abuses of the day, it is difficult to trace this to Wyclif's influence, and the same, probably, would have been

found without him. In weight of learning, and power of argument, those who wrote against his views outmatched his English followers.

But, in Bohemia, the influence, which was denied Wyclif in England, was permanent and strong. It is sufficient to refer to Loserth, who has treated the whole question fully and with an adequate knowledge of both Wyclif and Hus. Bohemian students had been at cosmopolitan Oxford in the days of Wyclif himself, and the connection thus begun continued long. The whole Hussite movement in its beginning was Wyclifite, and was called so by its friends and enemies alike; Wyclif's influence was firmly established there even before 1403. His views became part of a national and university movement which, on its philosophical side, was also realist. Hus was simply a disciple of Wyclif, and his works were mainly copies of Wyclif's; this revival of Wyclifite teaching led to the condemnation of forty-five selected errors at the council of Constance (4 May 1415). But, when, in the early years of the reformation, the works of Hus were printed, and came into the hands of Luther and Zwingli among others, it was really Wyclif who was speaking to them. Everything seemed to work together in disguising the real influence Wyclif had exercised.

. A survey, then, of Wyclif's life and works, as they can be estimated now, shows that much at one time assigned to him was not really his. He was the last of a school of philosophers, but, as such, his intellectual influence was not enduring; he was the first of a school of writers, but his literary influence was not great. His connection with our English Bible, difficult as it may be to state precisely, is, perhaps, his greatest achievement. His personality does not become plainer to us as his works are better known. Even his appearance is hardly known to us, for the portraits of him are of much later date and of uncertain genealogy. But Thorpe—an early Lollard and, probably, a disciple at Oxford—describes him as 'held by many the holiest of all in his day, lean of body, spare and almost deprived of strength, most pure in his life.' That he was simple and ascetic, quick of temper and too ready to speak, we hear from himself and can gather from his works. The secret of his influence, well suited to his day, whether working through the decaying Latin or the ripening English, lies in the sensitive, impulsive and fiery spirit of the Latin scholastic and English preacher, sympathetic towards movements and ideas, although not towards individual minds. But the medium through which that spirit worked belongs to an age that has passed away, and we cannot discover the secret of it for ourselves.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH PROSE

#### TREVISA. THE MANDEVILLE TRANSLATORS

EARLY English prose had, of necessity, a practical character. To those who understood neither Latin nor French all proclamations and instructions, laws and sermons, had to be issued in English, while, for a long time, the official Latin of the accountant and the law clerk had been very English in kind, even to the insertion of native words with a case-ending appended. With the increasing importance of the commons in the fourteenth century, the proceedings of parliament itself began to descend to the vulgar tongue, which obtained a signal recognition when three successive parliaments (1362-4) were opened by English speeches from the chancellor. Furthermore, a statute, in 1362, ordered the pleadings in the law-courts to be conducted in English, though the cases were to be recorded in Latin, on the ground that French was no longer sufficiently understood. Political sentiment may have inspired this declaration, which was as much overstated as the plea of two of Henry IV's envoys that French was, to their ignorant understandings, as bad as Hebrew; for the yearbooks continued to be recorded in French, and in French not only diplomatic letters but reports to Henry IV himself were written. The use of that tongue, so long the medium of polite intercourse, did not vanish suddenly, but a definite movement which ensured its doom took place in the grammar schools, after the Black Death, when English instead of French was adopted as the medium of instruction. John Trevisa, writing in 1385, tells us that this reform was the work of John Cornwall and his disciple Richard Pencrich, and that, 'in alle þe gramere scoles of Engelond children leweþ Frensche and construeþ and lerneþ an Engliſche,' with the result that they learned their grammar more quickly than children were wont to do, but with the disadvantage that they 'conneþ na more Frenſche than can hir liſt heele'—and 'þat is harme for hem and þey ſchulle paſſe

pe see and travaille in straunge landes.' Even noblemen had left off teaching their children French.

Before the close of the fourteenth century, therefore, it could no longer be assumed that all who wished to read would read French or Latin. There was a dearth of educated clergy after the Black Death; disaster abroad and at home left little inclination for refinement, and, when life was reduced to its essentials, the use of the popular speech naturally became universal. Thus, in the great scene of Richard II's deposition, English was used at the crucial moments, while, at the other end of the scale, king Richard's master cook was setting down his *Forme of Cury* for practical people. In the same way, on the continent, 'Sir John Mandeville' was writing in French before 1371 for the sake of nobles and gentlemen who knew not Latin, and there, as at home, Latin books and encyclopaedias were so far ceasing to be read that he could venture to plagiarise from the most recent. In England, the needs of students, teachers and preachers were now supplied in the vernacular by the great undertakings of John Trevisa, who translated what may be called the standard works of the time on scientific and humane knowledge—*De Proprietatibus Rerum* by Bartholomaeus Anglicus and Higden's *Polychronicon*. These great treatises are typically medieval, and the former a recognised classic in the universities. The minorite friar Bartholomaeus, who must have been born an Englishman, was a theological professor of the university of Paris, and his *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, an encyclopaedia of all knowledge concerned with nature, was compiled in the middle of the thirteenth century, possibly during his residence in Saxony, whither he was sent, in 1231, to organise the Franciscans of the duchy. Ranulf Higden was a monk of St Werburgh's, Chester, and wrote his *Polychronicon* about 1350. It is compiled from many authorities, and embraces the history of the entire world, from the Creation to Higden's own times; the different countries are described geographically, and all the favourite medieval legends in the histories of Persia, Babylon and Rome are introduced. There are many points in which Higden, Bartholomaeus and the later 'Sir John Mandeville' accord, revealing some common predecessor among the earlier accepted authorities; for the object of the medieval student was knowledge and no merit resided in originality: he who would introduce novelty did wisely to insert it in some older work which commanded confidence. Naturally, therefore, translations of books already known were the first prose works to be set before the English public, namely the two great

works of Trevisa, and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a book which, under a thin disguise of pious utility, was really a volume of entertainment.

The translators of these works aimed at being understood by a wider class of readers than the audience of Chaucer or even of *Piers the Plowman*. The style, therefore, though simple, is by no means terse. Where any doubt of the meaning might arise, pairs of words are often used, after a fashion not unknown to the poets. This usage prevailed during the following century—and with some reason, for the several dialects of England still differed so much that a southern man could scarcely apprehend what Trevisa calls the ‘scharpe slitting, frotynge and unschape’ speech of York. The translators desired only to convey the meaning of their originals and their renderings are extremely free; they omit or expand as they choose, and this saves early English prose from the pitfall of Latinism, giving it a certain originality, though at the cost of tautology. Trevisa, in the introduction to *Polychronicon*, explains to his patron that though he must sometimes give word for word, active for active, passive for passive, yet he must sometimes change the order and set active for passive, or ‘a resoun’ (a phrase) for a word, but he promises that, in any case, he will render the meaning exactly. These translations became recognised authorities among the reading public of the fifteenth century and may reasonably be considered the corner-stones of English prose. All three were accepted as absolutely veracious; the adventures of Mandeville, the legends of *Polychronicon*, the fairy-tale science of Bartholomaeus, were taken as literally as their scriptural quotations or hints on health. The information, all the same, seems to be conveyed with an eye to entertainment; little effort of thought is required in the reader; paragraphs are short, statements definite and the proportion of amusing anecdote is only equalled by the trite moralising, couched in common-place phrases, which had become a required convention in a materialist age. Books were distributed to the public by means of professional scribes; but, since there lay no sanctity in exact phraseology, the translators themselves were at the mercy of copyists. Cheaper copies were sometimes produced by curtailing the text, or newer information might be added. Trevisa’s *Bartholomaeus* was probably brought up to date by many a scribe, and the different MSS of his *Polychronicon*, though unaltered as to the narrative, present a variety of terms. Mandeville, too, appears in (probably) three distinct translations, the most popular of which was multiplied in shortened forms. It is,

therefore dangerous to base theories upon the forms found in any one MS; for we can rarely be sure of having the actual words of the author. Often, though not always, the MS may be inconsistent with itself, and, in any case, few MSS of philological interest exist in many copies; in other words, they were not popular versions, and, as most of the MSS are inconsistent with each other in spelling and in verb-forms, it seems that the general reader must have been accustomed to different renderings<sup>1</sup> of sound. Caxton need hardly have been so much concerned about the famous 'egges or eyren.'

John Trevisa, a Cornishman, had made himself somewhat notorious at Oxford. He was a Fellow of standing at Exeter College in 1362, and Fellow of Queen's, in 1372—6, when Wyclif and Nicholas Hereford were also residents, at a time when Queen's was in favour with John of Gaunt, and, perhaps, a rather fashionable house. The university was then, like other parts of England, a prey to disorder. Factions of regulars and seculars, quarrels between university authorities and friars, rivalry amongst booksellers and a revolt of the Bachelors of arts, produced petitions to parliament and royal commissions in quick succession. Amongst these dissensions had occurred a quarrel in 'Quenehalle,' so violent that the archbishop of York, visitor of the college, had intervened and, in 1376, in spite of resistance and insult, had expelled the Provost and three Fellows, of whom one was Trevisa, 'for their unworthiness.' It is possible that Wyclifite leanings caused this disgrace; for the university was already in difficulties on the reformer's account, and both Exeter and Queen's are believed to have been to some extent Wyclifite, while Trevisa's subsequent writings betray agreement with Wyclif's earlier opinions<sup>1</sup>. The ejected party carried off the keys, charters, plate, books and money of their college, for which the new Provost was clamouring in vain three years later. Royal commissions were disregarded till 1380, when Trevisa and his companions at length gave up their plunder. No ill-will seems to have been felt towards the ejected Fellows, for Trevisa rented a chamber

<sup>1</sup> The old suggestion of Henry Wharton, rejected by Forshall and Madden, that Trevisa might be the author of the general prologue to the second Wyclifite Bible, has been lately repeated, on the ground of the likeness of their expressed opinions on the art of translation. But, apart from other arguments, the style is not Trevisa's, nor its self-assertion, nor its vigorous protestantism. Trevisa's anti-papal remarks are timid and he never finds fault with the secular clergy. The same principles of translation were in the literary atmosphere, and it is open to doubt whether Trevisa's scholarship would have been equal to the full and precise explanations of the prologue.

at Queen's between 1395 and 1399, probably while executing his translation of Bartholomæus. Most of his subsequent life, however, was spent as vicar of Berkeley in Gloucestershire and chaplain to Thomas, Lord Berkeley, reputed to have been a disciple of Wyclif. He also, like Wyclif, held a non-resident canonry of the collegiate church of Westbury-on-Trym. At some earlier date, Trevisa had travelled, for he incidentally mentions his experiences at Breisach on the Rhine, Aachen and Aix-les-Bains, but he had not seen Rome.

His two great translations were made at the desire of Lord Berkeley. *Polychronicon* was concluded in 1387, *De Proprietatibus* in 1398. He executed several smaller translations, including the famous sermon of archbishop FitzRalph, himself an Oxford scholar, against the mendicant orders, and, probably, a translation of the Bible now lost.

Trevisa was a man of wide reading rather than exact scholarship; his explanation of the *quadrivium* is incorrect, and his Latinity was far inferior to Higden's. But his robust good sense, his regard for strict accuracy and his determination to be understood, make him an interesting writer. He was fond of nature, he knew his *De Proprietatibus* well before he wrote it in English and he could even bring witness of additional wonders, told to him at first hand by trustworthy parishioners of Berkeley. Without historical acumen, he does not hesitate to level scathing criticisms at old writers, but, on the other hand, he sometimes clears away a difficulty by common sense. Why was Higden puzzled by the inconsistent descriptions of Alcuyd? was there not more than one Carthage, and is there not a Newport in Wales and another in the parish of Berkeley?

The explanations so frequently inserted in the text suggest that, though *Polychronicon* was translated in the first instance for Lord Berkeley, a wider public was in the maker's mind. His notes are usually brief: .

Ethiopia, blew mēn lond; laborintus, Daedalus his hous; Ecco is þe reboundynge of noyae; Gode genius is to menyngge a spirit þat folowet a man al his lyfetime; Kent and Essex, Westsex and Mercia—þat is as hit were a greet deel of myddel Englonde; theatres, places hiȝe and real to stonde and sytte ynne and byholde aboute: Tempe Florida, likynge place wip floures. .

It is but seldom that he is absurd, as when he renders *matrones* by *old mothers*, or gives a derivation for *satirical*: 'som poete is i-clepede satiricus, and haȝ þat name of satis, þat is inow, for þe matire þat he spekeȝ of he toucheȝ at þe fulle.' These lengthier notes, inserted 'for to brynge here hertes out of þoust' he always

signs 'Trevisa.' We observe that he feels it advisable to explain in full a very simple use of hyperbole.

As a translator, many more slips in scholarship might be forgiven him for the raciness of the style. Neither in terms nor structure does it suggest the Latin, but the interpolated criticisms are less wordy than the translation. Trevisa expands his original, not because he is a poor Latinist but partly because he wishes to be understood, and partly from that pleasure in doublets which would seem to be a natural English inheritance. Sometimes the synonymous words are accepted catch-phrases, sometimes they evince pure pleasure in language. We always get 'domesmen and juges,' 'tempest and tene,' 'þis worlde wyde'. Not that Trevisa is enslaved by alliteration; he uses it less as the work proceeds, save in the regular phrases; but he loves balanced expression, and ruins Higden's favourite antitheses<sup>2</sup>. His picturesqueness is, perhaps, elementary, less that of an artist than of a child<sup>3</sup>.

It is Trevisa's principle to translate every word: the Mediterranean is 'þe see of myddel erþe.' Even when he cannot understand a set of verses he doggedly turns them into a jumble of pure nonsense which he asserts to be rime, adding, candidly, 'God woot what þis is to mene.' The outspoken criticisms and occasional touches of sarcasm seem to betray a man impatient of conventions which he felt to be practical abuses, but scrupulously orthodox in every detail which could be held to affect creed. To the wonderful fable of the marble horses at Rome he appends the moral that it shows 'þat who forsakeþ all þyng forsakeþ all his cloþes, and so it foloweþ þat þey þat beþ wel i-cloþed and goþ aboute and beggeþ and gadereþ money and corn and catel of oþer men forsakeþ not al þing.' On the other hand, he is shocked that Gregory Nazianzen tells 'a ungodly tale of so worthy a prince of philosphes as Aristotle was.' A saying of the mythical Nectabanus: 'No man may fleþ his owne destanye' is thus stigmatised: 'Nectabanus seide þis sawe and was a wiiche, and þerfore it is nereþe þe bettere to trowynge...for from every mishap þat man is i-schape in þis worlde to falle inne God may hym

<sup>1</sup> 'Limites = þe meeres and þe marks, *affixit* = dede hym moche woo and tene, *fortes* = stalworþe men and wight.' So too 'a pigmei bokeþ hym to bataile and array, hym to fyt.'

<sup>2</sup> '*Figmenta gentitium, dicta Ethiorum, miranda locorum*,' becomes 'feynynge and sawes of myþibeled and lawles men and wondres and mervellis of dyverse countries and londes.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Ocean by clippeþ al þe erþe aboute as a garland'; *antiquitas* = 'longe passyge of tyme and elde of dedes.'

save ȝif it is his wille.' To the charitable miracle recorded of Dunstan and St Gregory who, respectively, prayed the souls of Edwy and Trajan out of hell, he refuses credit—'so it myȝe seeme to a man þat were worse þan wood and out of riȝt bileve.' At least once, he deliberately modifies his author: Higden observes, giving his reasons, that the Gospel of Matthew must, in a certain passage, be defective; Trevisa writes that here St Matthew 'is ful skars for mene men myȝte understonde.' Yet, though punctiliously orthodox, Trevisa has scant reverence for popes or for fathers of the church, and none for monks and friars. Edgar, he says, was lewdly moved to substitute monks for (secular) clerks: and, in at least two of the early MSS, though not in all, a passage distinctly Wyclifite is inserted in the midst of the translation:

and nowe for þe moste partie monkes beþ worste of all, for þey beþ to riche and þat makeþ hem to take more hede about seculer besynesse þan gostely devocioun...þerfore seculer lordes schulde take away the superfluyte of here possessions and ȝeve it to hem þat needeþ or elles, whan þey knowen þat, þey beþ cause and mayntenours of here evil dedes...for it were almesse to take away þe superfluite of here possessions now þan it was at þe firste fundacioun to ȝeve hem what hem nedede.

Though this passage is not signed 'Trevisa,' its occurrence in the copy which belonged to Berkeley's son-in-law Richard Beauchamp suggests its authenticity. Trevisa was a positive man: he falls foul of Alfred of Beverley for reckoning up the shires of England 'without Cornwall' and he cannot forgive Giraldus Cambrensis for qualifying a tale with *si fas sit credere*.

The translation of Bartholomaeus, also made for Lord Berkeley, though doubtless as popular as the chronicle, has, perhaps, not survived in so authentic a form; moreover, embodying the accepted learning of the Middle Ages, it gave less scope for Trevisa's originality. History anyone might criticise but novelty in science was only less dangerous than in theology. The style of the original, too, is inferior to Higden's; there are already duplicate terms in plenty, and, though Trevisa contrived to increase them, he got less opportunity for phrasing.

This encyclopaedia, in nineteen books, is a work of reference for divine and natural science, intermixed with moral and metaphor. Beginning with the Trinity, the prophets and angels, it proceeds to properties of soul and body, and so to the visible universe. A book on the divisions of time includes a summary of the poetical, astrological and agricultural aspects of each month; the book on birds in general includes bees, and here occurs the edifying imaginary picture of these pattern creatures which was the

origin of so much later fable, including Canterbury's speech in *King Henry V.* There are a few indications of weariness or haste as Trevisa's heavy task proceeds, but it is especially interesting for his rendering of scriptural quotations. Like the writers of *Piers the Plowman* and like Mandeville, Trevisa expects certain Latin phrases to be familiar to his readers, catchwords to definite quotations; but he translates the texts in full in a version certainly not Wyclif's and possibly his own. Always simple and picturesque, these passages cause regret for the loss of that translation of the Bible, which, according to Caxton, Trevisa made. Caxton's words in the *prohemye* to *Polychronicon* imply that he had seen the translation; but no more is heard of it until the first earl of Berkeley gave to James II an ancient MS 'of some part of the Bible,' which had been preserved (he said) in Berkeley Castle for 'neare 400 years.' It probably passed to the cardinal of York, and may have been that copy of Trevisa's English Bible said once to have been seen in the Vatican catalogue, but now unknown.

The dialogue between a lord and a clerk—Lord Berkeley and John Trevisa—prefixed to *Polychronicon* is really Trevisa's excuse for his temerity. It gives a somewhat humorous picture of the doubts of the man of letters. Ought famous books and scriptural texts to be put into the vulgar tongue? Will not critics pick holes? Lord Berkeley brushes his objections aside. Foreign speech is useless to the plain man: 'it is wonder that thou makest so febel argumentis and hast goon soo longe to scole.' The clerk gives in, breathing a characteristically alliterative prayer for 'Wit and wisdom wisely to work, might and mind of right meaning to make translation trusty and true.' He has only one question to put: 'whether is you lever have a translacion of þese cronykes in ryme or in prose?' We ought to be grateful for Lord Berkeley's reply:—'In prose, for comynlich prose is more clepe than ryme, more eay & more playn to knowe & understonde.'

To be certain in any given instance exactly what words Trevisa used is not always possible, for the four MSS which have been collated for the Rolls edition of *Polychronicon* show a surprising variety. Even in the same MS, old and new forms come close together, as 'feng' and 'fong,' and other variations of past tenses and participles, though the sentence is always the same<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The same MS, which usually gives 'mynecheon,' 'comlynge,' 'fullynge,' 'maw-mette,' 'wood,' 'bytook,' 'dele,' gives, also, at least once, 'gonne,' 'alien,' 'baptame' and 'i-cristened,' 'idole,' 'madde,' 'took,' 'partye.' Prefixes are already disappearing:

Most of Trevisa's vocabulary is still in common use, though a few words became obsolete soon after he wrote, for instance: 'orped,' 'magel,' 'malshave,' 'heled,' 'hatte,' which stand for 'brave,' 'absurd,' 'caterpillar,' 'covered,' 'called.' He uses 'triacle' sarcastically for 'poison'—'Nero quyte his moder that triacle.' He usually distinguishes between 'pewes' (manners) and 'manere' (method) and between 'feelynge' (perception) and 'gropyng' (touching). 'Outtake' is invariably used for 'except,' which did not come into use until long after. Perhaps in 'Appollin,' as the equivalent of Apollo Delphicus, we may recognise the future appellation of a later personage. Trevisa's translation needs only to be compared with the bungling performance of the later anonymous translator<sup>1</sup>, in order to be recognised as a remarkable achievement of fluency. Where Higden tried to be dignified, Trevisa was frankly colloquial; this characteristic marks all his translations and gives them the charm of easy familiarity. His use of the speech of the masses is often vigorous—a 'dykeré,' for a 'dead stock,' the 'likpot,' for the 'first finger,' 'he up with a staff þat he had in hond.' He had, too, a fine onomatopoeic taste: Higden's *boatus et garritus* (talk of peasants) becomes a 'wlaflerynge, chikerynge, harynge and garryge grisbayting'; and to this sense of sound is, no doubt, owing the alliteration to which, though southern by birth and education, he was certainly addicted—a curious trait in a prose writer. His work would seem to have been appreciated, the number of MSS still extant of *Polychronicon* and its production by the early printers proving its popularity; and his *Description of England* formed the model for later accounts. The chroniclers of the sixteenth century who quoted from *Polychronicon* as from an unquestionable authority were, perhaps, not altogether uninfluenced by the copiously vigorous style of this first delineation of England and her story in native English.

*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* had been a household word in eleven languages and for five centuries before it was

we have 'to-sparpled' and 'to-schad' (*dispersus*), 'i-hilde' and 'i-schad' (*infusum*), but few others. In the genitive, the separate 'his' is usual—'Austin his booke,' though we get 'the chirohes roves'; the combination 'oon of Oristes nayles, our lady smok and Seynt Symon his arme' gives all forms. The feminine, as a rule, has no mark, though 'his' occurs twice, possibly by an error of the scribe ('Faustina his body,' 'Latona his son'). Another translation of *Polychronicon*, made by an anonymous hand, 1432—50, uses, by preference, the preposition 'of,' but 'his' had even intruded into proper names. Trevisa expressly states that, in his day, Harnishowe 'is nowe Ern his hulle' and Billingsgate 'Belyn his gate.'

<sup>1</sup> Printed with Trevisa's in the Bolls edition.

ascertained that Sir John never lived, that his travels never took place, and that his personal experiences, long the test of others' veracity, were compiled out of every possible authority, going back to Pliny, if not further.

*The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundevile, knight*, purported to be a guide for pilgrims to Jerusalem, giving the actual experiences of the author. It begins with a suitably serious prologue, exhorting men to reverence the Holy Land, since, as he that will publish anything makes it to be cried in the middle of a town, so did He that formed the world suffer for us at Jerusalem, which is the middle of the earth. All the possible routes to Jerusalem are briefly dealt with, in order to introduce strange incidents; and mention of saints and relics, interspersed with texts not always *à propos*, presses upon more secular fables. We pass from the tomb of St John to the story of Ypocras's daughter turned into a dragon; a circumstantial notice of port Jaffa concludes by describing the iron chains in which Andromeda, a great giant, was bound and imprisoned before Noah's flood<sup>1</sup>. But Mandeville's geographical knowledge could not all be compressed into the journeys to Jerusalem, even taking one *via* Turkestan; so, when they are finished, with their complement of legends from Sinai and Egypt, he presents, in a second portion of the book, an account of the eastern world beyond the borders of Palestine. Herein are lively pictures of the courts of the Great Cham and Prester John, of India and the isles beyond, for China and all these eastern countries are called islands. There is the same combination of the genuine with the fabulous, but the fables are bolder: we read of the growth of diamonds and of ants which keep hills of gold dust, of the fountain of youth and the earthly paradise, of valleys of devils and loadstone mountains. You must enter the sea at Venice or Genoa<sup>2</sup>, the only ports of departure Sir John seems acquainted with, and go to Trebizond, where the wonders begin with a tale of Athanasius imprisoned by the pope of Rome. In the same way, all we learn of Armenia is the admirable story of the watching of the sparrow-hawk, not, says Sir John cautiously, that 'chastelle Despuere' (Fr. *del espuvier*) lies beside the traveller's road, but 'he þat will see swilk mervailles him behoves sum tynþus wende out of þe way.'

Both parts of the book have been proved to have been compiled from the authentic travels of others, with additions gathered from almost every possible work of reference. The journeys to

<sup>1</sup> Andromeda had become merged in Prometheus.

<sup>2</sup> Genoa, Januæna.

Jerusalem are principally based upon an ancient account of the first crusade by Albert of Aix, written two-and-a-half centuries before Mandeville, and the recent itinerary of William of Boldensele (1336), to which are added passages from a number of pilgrimage books of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries<sup>1</sup>. The second half of Mandeville's work is 'a garbled plagiarism' from the travels of a Franciscan missionary, friar Odoric of Pordenone (1330), into which, as into Boldensele's narrative, are foisted all manner of details, wonders and bits of natural history from such sources as *The Golden Legend*, the encyclopaedias of Isidore or Bartholomaeus, the *Trésor* of Brunetto Latini, Dante's tutor, or the *Speculum* of Vincent de Beauvais (c. 1250). Mandeville uses impartially the sober *Historia Mongolorum* of Plano Carpini<sup>2</sup> or the medieval forgeries called *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, and *The Letter of Prester John*; no compilation of fiction or erudition comes amiss to him. He takes no account of time; though he is quite up to date in his delimitation of that shifting kingdom, Hungary, many of his observations on Palestine are wrong by three centuries; a note he gives on Ceylon was made by Caesar on the Britons; some of his science comes, through a later medium, from Pliny; his pigmies, who fight with great birds, his big sheep of the giants on the island mountain, boast a yet more ancient and illustrious ancestry. The memory which could marshal such various knowledge is as amazing as the art which harmonised it all on the plane of the fourteenth century traveller, and gave to the collection the impress of an individual experience.

The genius which evolved this wonderful literary forgery sent it forth to fame from the great commercial city of Liège in the latter part of the fourteenth century. The unquestioned myth of its origin was that John de Mandeville, knight, of St Albans, had left England in 1322 to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem; he afterwards travelled all over the world and, returning homewards in 1343, was laid up at Liège by arthritic gout and attended by a doctor, John *ad barbam*, whom he had previously met in Cairo. At the physician's suggestion he wrote, to solace his enforced dulness, a relation of his long experiences, which he finished in 1356 or 1357. Such is the statement given in the principal Latin edition; but neither the gout nor the physician

<sup>1</sup> Including *Pèlerinages por aler en Therusalem*, c. 1281, *The continuation of Wm. of Tyre* (1261), *Jacques de Vitry* (d. 1240) and others.

<sup>2</sup> Papal emissary to Tartary in 1245.

are mentioned in the earliest MS now known, which is in French, dated 1371, and was originally bound up with a medical treatise on the plague by *Maistre Jehan de Bourgoigne autrement dit à la Barbe*, citizen of Liège, physician of forty years' experience, author (before 1365) of various works of science, of whose plague treatise several other copies still exist. Now, there was at this time resident in Liège a voluminous man of letters, Jean d'Outremeuse, a writer of histories and fables in both verse and prose. He told, in his *Myreur des Histors*<sup>1</sup>, how a modest old man, content to be known as Jehan de Bourgogne or Jean à la Barbe, confided on his death-bed to Outremeuse, in 1372, that his real name was John de Mandeville, *comte de Montfort en Angleterre et seigneur de l'isle de Campdi et du chateau Perouse*, and that he had been obliged to fly from home in 1322 because he had slain a man of rank. Unluckily, Outremeuse's story only confounds Mandeville's own, as set forth in the Latin travels, and adds impossible titles to this knight turned doctor. Outremeuse also added that he himself inherited the old man's collection of foreign jewels and—damaging admission—his library. He quotes Mandeville sometimes in his own historical works; but he does not confess the use he makes of the genuine travels of friar Odoric—and neither did 'Mandeville.' According to Outremeuse, Sir John was buried in the church of the Guillemins, and there, by the end of the fourteenth century, stood his tomb, seen by several trustworthy witnesses in the succeeding centuries, adorned by a shield bearing a coat, which proved to be that of the Tyrrell family (fourteenth century), and an inscription differently reported by each traveller. Tomb and church were destroyed during the Revolution. At his birthplace, St Albans, the abbey boasted a ring of his gift, and, in course of time, even showed the place of his grave.

Whether John the Bearded really told Outremeuse that he was John de Mandeville of the impossible titles, or whether Outremeuse only pretended that he did, we cannot hope to ascertain. The puzzling point is the selection of so plausible a name: for there was a John de Bourgogne concerned, though not as a principal, in the troubles of Edward II, who had a pardon in 1321, revoked after Boroughbridge, 1322, when he fled the country. And there was a John de Mandeville, of no great importance, also of the rebellious party, who received a pardon in 1313, but of whom no more is known. The facts ascertained so far about the

<sup>1</sup> In Bk. 4, now lost, but copied, as to this entry, by Louis Abry, before 1720. See Nicholson, *The Academy*, xxi (1884), p. 261.

real author or authors of the *Travels* are: that he was not an Englishman; that he never visited the places he describes, or visited them without making any intelligent observation; that he wrote at Liège before 1371, and in French; that he was a good linguist and had access to an excellent library; that his intimate acquaintance with nearly all the works of travel and of reference then known implies long and diligent study hardly compatible with travelling; that he gauged exactly the taste of the reading public and its easy credence; and, finally, that he (or they) carried out the most successful literary fraud ever known in one of the most delightful volumes ever written. It would be curious if Liège contained at once two men so well read as Outremeuse and 'Mandeville,' both compiling wonder-books, secretly using the same basis, and not in collusion, and it is remarkable that the Latin version with its tale of the physician contains some adventures, not in the French and English versions, of Ogir the Dane, a hero on whom Outremeuse wrote an epic

To the statements made by the author himself no credit need be attached. This greater than Defoe used before Defoe the art of introducing such little details as give to fictions the appearance of personal recollection. He is great on 'numbers and measurements not in his originals, on strange alphabets, some real, some garbled or 'not to be identified'; and, as his statements about himself cannot be verified, there is no more ground for believing that he visited Cairo and met Jean à la Barbe there, or was laid up at Liège with arthritic gout, than that he drank of the fountain of youth and knew the road to the earthly paradise. Similarly, the statement of the French MS that the author ought to have written in Latin, to be more concise, but preferred Romance as more readily understood by travelled gentlemen who could testify to his truthfulness, is to be accepted on the ground of internal evidence, and because the Latin versions all betray a later date and a French original. That the writer was no Englishman, may be deduced from the absence of any local colouring, and from his ignorance of English distances, more surely than from the erroneous titles and coat of arms.

*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* were translated into almost every European language, and some 300 MSS are said to be still in existence. The three standard versions are the Latin, French and English, all of which, as early as 1403, Mandeville was credited with having himself composed. Of the five known Latin versions, one<sup>1</sup> was far better known than the others; 12 copies of it survive,

<sup>1</sup> Warner's 'vulgate.'

and it was the basis of other translations. It contains the allusion to the physician. Not a very early version, it was made from the French, shortened in some respects, but with some interpolations. The French manuscripts are said to be all of one type and many copies remain; some of them were written in England for English readers, proving that, in the fifteenth century, the educated might still read French for pleasure. The best MS is the oldest, the French MS of 1371, once in the library of Charles V. Of English versions there seem to be three, represented by (1) the Cotton MS<sup>1</sup>, (2) the Egerton MS<sup>2</sup> and (3) defective MSS<sup>3</sup>. The Cotton translation was the work of a midland writer who kept very closely to a good French original. The Egerton was made by a northerner who worked with both a Latin and a French exemplar, but whose French model must have differed from any now known, unless the translator, whose touch is highly individual, deliberately composed a free paraphrase. But the version popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was much shorter than either of these, being taken from some French MS which lacked pages covering nearly two chapters, while the translator, too dull to discover the omission, actually ran two incongruous accounts together and made nonsense of the words juxtaposed. The first printed edition corrected the error only very briefly. Though it is possible that this defective version, represented by several MSS, might come from the same original as the complete and superior Cotton MS, seeing that copyists not unfrequently shortened their tasks, the differences are so numerous that it seems, on the whole, easier to assume an independent hand. There is a curious variation in the dates assigned: the best French and Latin texts and the Cotton give 1322 for the pilgrimage and 1355 or 1357 for the composition of the book: the defective MSS and the Egerton put the dates ten years later, 1332 and 1366.

Of these three versions, the defective one is the least spirited, the Cotton is the most *vraisemblable*, owing to the fulness of detail and the plausibility with which everything appears to be accounted for, as it is in the French, while the Egerton is the most original in style and, though it omits some passages found in the Cotton, sometimes expands the incidents given into a more harmonious picture. The change of the impersonal 'men' to 'I,' the occasional emphatic use of 'he pis,' 'he pat' instead of the mere pronoun, the vivid comparisons—the incubator 'like a hous

<sup>1</sup> First printed 1725.

<sup>2</sup> Printed 1899 for the Roxburghe Club.

<sup>3</sup> Often printed 1499—1725.

full of holes'—and countless similar touches, give a special charm to the tale in this version. So vigorous and native is the composition that it scarcely gives the impression of a translation, and gallicisms, such as 'þat ilke foot is so mykill þat it will cover and outhre all the body,' are rare exceptions. We find plenty of old and northern words<sup>1</sup>. Slight hints of antipathy to Rome may be detected, and there are some additions to the recital not found in other English copies, in particular a legend of St Thomas of Canterbury, oddly placed in Thule. The writer of this version so far identifies himself with Sir John as to add to the account of the sea of gravel and the fish caught therein an assertion that he had eaten of them himself. It matters little that there are sundry inaccuracies of translation, such as the rendering of *latymers* (Fr. *lathomeres* = interpreters) by 'men þat can speke Latyne'; but the proper names are terribly confused; we not only get 'Ysai' and 'Crete' for 'Hosea' and 'Greece,' or 'Architriclyne' as the name of the bridegroom at Cana, but also other quite unintelligible forms. Indeed, the transformations of place-names might be worth while tracing: thus, the town Hesternit appears in Latin as *Sternes ad fines Epapie*, in a French version as *Ny e quis a fine Pape*, in Cotton as 'Ny and to the cytie of fipe Pape,' in Egerton as 'Sternes and to þe vities of Affynpane.' The names of the Cotton version are far more accurate than those of the Egerton, as its vocabulary and spelling are also less archaic, but the translator sometimes errs by transferring the sound of his French original; so, *poys d'arbres* becomes 'lytill Arborne,' *iales* of Italy become 'hills,' and, with like carelessness, *porte du fer* is turned to 'gates of hell,' *signes du ciel* to 'swannes of hevene,' *cure d'avoir* to 'charge of aveer' (Egerton, 'hafyng of erthely gudes'). The Cottonian redactor is strong in scientific explanations and moral reflections, and, like his Egertonian brother, must add his mite to the triumphs of the traveller; to the account of the vegetable lamb he adds: 'Of that frute I have eten, alle thoughe it were wondrfulle but that I knowe wel that God is marveyllous in his werkes.'

This identification of themselves with Mandeville is partly the cause of the high place which these three (or two) translators occupy in the history of English letters. In all literary essentials their work is original; tautology has disappeared; they find in their model

<sup>1</sup> 'Growe,' 'graven' (buffed), 'warne' (unless), 'buse' (must), 'bese' (is), 'nedder' (dragon or serpent), 'oker' (usury), 'unthwhile' (formerly), 'spire after' (ask for), 'mesells' (leprosy), 'salde wonder dere,' 'ga na ferrere,' 'to see on ferrum' (from afar), 'mirkness umbelapped þe emperoure.'

no temptation to repetition or to jingling constructions and they add none; the narrative goes smoothly and steadily forward, with an admirable choice of words but without any phrasing, as different from the lavish colloquialism of Trevisa as from the unshapen awkwardness of the Wyclifite sermons. This natural style of simple dignity undoubtedly aids the genius of the original author in investing his fairy tales with that atmosphere of truthfulness which is the greatest triumph of his art. In the first place, Mandeville had the boldness not to be utilitarian, but to write with no other aim than entertainment. It is true that he professes to begin a manual of pilgrimage, but the thin disguise is soon cast aside, and the book could scarcely be mistaken for either a religious or a solidly instructive work. It was a new venture in literature—amusement had been hitherto the sphere of poets. And what vivifies the book, what marks it off from medieval tales like those of *Gesta Romanorum*, was also a new thing in prose: the sense of a human interest which is really the inspiring principle of the whole and forms out of scattered anecdotes a consistent story. The descriptions are of people and their behaviour, and in the midst is the quiet but discernible figure of Sir John himself. It was to the interest in human life that Mandeville appealed and this, in turn, he educated. He had, moreover, skilful devices for creating the feeling of reality: the wonders are sometimes accounted for by what appears a rational cause; touches of criticism or personal reflection contradict the supposition of simplicity; with equally circumstantial gravity he describes the trees which bear 'boumbe,' or cotton, and those which bear the very short gourds 'which, when ripe, men open and find a little beast with flesh and blood and bone, like a little lamb without wool.' Certainly, he was abreast of the most recent knowledge of his time in his account of the cotton-tree and in his assurance of the roundness of the earth. His readers, he says, witten well that the dwellers on the other side of the earth are straight against us, feet against feet, and he feels certain that by always going onwards one may get round the world, especially since Jerusalem is in the middle of the earth, as men may prove by a spear pight into the ground which casts no shadow at midday in the equinox. Then, as many journeys as it takes to reach Jerusalem, so many more will bring one to the edge of the world, after which one must proceed to India and other places on the underneath side; 'I have oft tymes thought on a tale þat I herd when I was yung of a man who travelled till he reached an island

where he heard one calling to plow oxen in words of his own tongue; 'but I suppose he had so long went on land and off see envirounand þe world þat he was comen in to his awen marches' (Egerton). The author dovetails his bits of genuine information into his fictions with deft ingenuity. One of the means of proving a diamond is to 'take þe adamaund that drawez þe nedill til him by þe whilk schippe men er governed in þe sea' (Egerton), and, if the diamond is good, the adamant, 'that is the schipmannes ston' (Cotton) will not act upon the needle while the gem rests upon it. But Mandeville cannot refrain from heightening the marvellous stories culled elsewhere. To the account of the diamond, sufficiently strange in 'Ysidre' or 'Bertilmeu,' to whose corroboration he appeals, he must needs add that 'þai growe sammen, male and female, and þai er nurischt with dew of heven...and bringes furth smale childer and so þai multiply and growez all way' (Egerton). He has often seen that they increase in size yearly, if taken up by the roots with a bit of the rock they grow on and often wetted with May dew. The source of this detail, as of the stories of Athanasius, of the man who environed the earth and of the hole in the Ark 'whare the fend ȝode out' when Noe said Benedicite, has not yet been discovered. Probably Mandeville, invented them, as he did the details of the Great Cham's court: hangings of red leather, said Odoric—hangings made of panther skins as red as blood, says Mandeville; now, a panther, in those times, was reckoned a beast of unheard-of beauty and magical properties. Odoric expressly owned that he did not find such wonders in Prester John's land as he had expected from rumour; Mandeville declares that the half had not been reported, but that he will be chary of what he relates, for nobody would believe him. Such indications of a becoming reticence help to create the air of moderation which, somehow, pervades the book. The author's tone is never loud, his illustrations are pitched on a homelier key than the marvel he is describing—so of the crocodiles, 'whan thei gon bi places that ben gravelly it semethe as thoughe men hadde drawn a gret tree thorghe the gravelly places' (Cotton). It is a blemish on the grandeur of the Cham's court that 'the comouns there eten withouten clothe upon here knees.' Mandeville faces the probability that his readers may withhold belief: 'he þat will trowe it, trowe it; and he þat will not, lese. For I will never þe latter tell sum what þat I sawe...wheder þai will trowe it or þai nil' (Egerton). He discounts a possible comparison with Odoric by mentioning that two of his company in the valley of devils were

'frere menoures of Lombardy,' and artfully calls to witness the very book that he stole from, 'the Lapidary that many men knowen noght.' Not that he ever avowedly quotes, save, rather inaccurately, from the Scriptures. The necessary conventional dress of orthodoxy he supplies to his travels by the device of crediting the mysterious eastern courts with holding certain Christian tenets. The shrine of St Thomas is visited 'als comounly and with als gret devocioun as Cristene men gon' to Seynt James' (Odoric said, St Peter's); Prester John's people know the Pater-noster and consecrate the host.

Mandeville hopes that everyone will be converted; his tolerance of strange creeds and manners is that of a gentle, not of a careless, mind. The Soudan of Egypt—who, indeed, rebuked the vices of Christianity after the fashion of Scott's Saladin—would have wedded him to a princess, had he but changed his faith. 'But I thanke God I had no wille to don it for no thing that he behighten me' (Cotton). It is with such light touches that Sir John pictures himself. He is no egoist, nor braggart; we know nothing of his appearance; he does no deeds of prowess himself 'for myn unable suffisance'; his religion is that of ordinary men. He ventured, duly shaven and crossed, down the perilous vale, full of treasure and haunted by devils,

I touched none (he says) because that the Devels ben so subtile to make a thing to seme otherwise than it is, for to disceyve mankynde,... and also because that I wolde not ben put out of my devocioun; for I was more devout thanne than evere I was before or after, and alle for the drede of Fendes that I saughe in dyverse Figures (Cotton).

Sir John, in short, reveals himself as a gentleman, filled with a simple curiosity and with that love of strange travel which, he says, is native to Englishmen, born under the moon, the planet which moves round the world so much more quickly than the others. He is honest and broad-minded, free from any taint of greed—there is not a sordid observation in the whole book—and that he ever comes to an end is due to his consideration for others, for were he to tell all he had seen nothing would be left for other travellers to say: 'Wherefore I wole holde me stille.'

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SCOTTISH LANGUAGE

#### EARLY AND MIDDLE SCOTS

THE history of the Scots vernacular is, in its earlier stages, a recapitulation of the tale of Northumbrian Old English and northern Middle English. It is, perhaps, too dogmatic to say, especially when the documentary evidence is so slight, that, in the earliest period, the language north of the Tweed was identical with that between the Tweed and the Humber; but we may reasonably conclude that the differences were of the narrowest. The runic verses of *The 'Dream of the Rood'* on the cross at Ruthwell, Durnfriesshire, might have been cut on the shores of the Forth, or in Yorkshire. Later, though local differences may have been accentuated, chiefly by the intrusion at one point or another of Scandinavian or other words, the structural identity of the language in the two areas was maintained. The justice of this assumption appears when, in a still later period, we have an opportunity of comparison by written texts. It is unnecessary to point out the close kinship, in the fourteenth century, of the language of Barbour's *Bruce*, written in Aberdeen, with that of the writings of Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, near Doncaster. The likeness is the more remarkable, if we accept the opinion that Barbour's text, in its extant form, was written out in the fifteenth century. It is, therefore, not only scientifically accurate to treat the language of the *Bruce* as northern English, but it is historically justifiable to call that language 'English.' To Barbour and his successors—till a change in political circumstance made a change in nomenclature necessary—their tongue is not 'Scots,' but invariably 'Ynglis,' or English.

The name 'Scots' or 'Scottish' has been applied to the language of the whole or part of the area of modern Scotland in such a variety of senses that some statement of the history of the term is a necessary preliminary to even the briefest outline.

Modern associations and modern fervour have too often obscured the purely linguistic issues. In its original application, 'Scots' is the speech of the Scottish settlers in Alban: that is, Celtic of the Goidelic group, the ancestor of the present Scottish Gaelic. In due course, the name was applied to the vernacular of the entire area north of the dividing-line between the estuaries of the Forth and Clyde. As this extension covered the eastern Pictish territory, then under the rule of the kings of the Scots, it is possible that some change was ultimately effected by the political association of these several northern non-Teutonic communities. Whatever be the outcome of speculation on this point, the only consideration pertinent to our present purpose is that the speech of this wider area was known as 'Scots' to all peoples south of the dividing-line, whether Anglian settlers in the Lothians or Bretts (or 'Welsh') in Strathclyde.

When the limits of the 'Scottish' kingdom were enlarged southward and had, in the thirteenth century, become identical with those of modern Scotland, the name 'Scots' was no longer applied to the language of the rulers. The process of amalgamation was, in every sense, an anglicisation, which became more effective as the Scottish kings carried out their policy of intruding Teutonic culture into the eastern fringe of their ancestral 'Scotland.' Thus, when the wider political idea of a 'Scotland' takes shape, we find 'Ynglis' the name of the speech of the 'Scottish' court and of the surrounding Anglian population in the Lothians and Fife, and 'Scots' that of the speech of the northern and western provinces. This alienation of the anglicised Scot from the Gaelic Scot—illustrated in the story of Duncan and Macbeth—was completed in the wars of independence, in which the Teutonic or 'English' elements representing 'Scottish' nationality were hampered in their resistance to the Anglo-French civilisation of England by the vigorous opposition of non-Teutonic Scots. When the struggle was ended and Teutonic Scotland started on a fresh career of national endeavour, the separation from the Celtic Scots was absolute. On the other hand, certain elements of Anglo-French culture were readily assimilated. The guiding factor was race. For some time after this, even at the close of the fifteenth century, 'Scots' is the name for the Gaelic speech of the north and west. By writers of Lothian birth, this tongue is spoken of disrespectfully as the tongue of 'brokin men' and 'savages' and 'bribour bairdis.' These Lothian men are Scots, willing subjects of the king of 'Scots,'

proud of their 'Scotland'; but they are careful to say that the language which they speak is 'Ynglis.'

Later, however, with the political and social advance of the kingdom and the development of a strong national sentiment during the quarrels with England, it came about, inevitably, that the term 'Ynglis' no longer commended itself to northern patriotism. It was the language of the 'auld enemy,' an enemy the nearest and the most troublesome. If these northerners were proud of Scotland and of being Scots, why might not their tongue be 'Scots'? In some such way the historian guesses at the purpose of sixteenth century literature in taking to itself the name of the despised speech of the 'bards,' and in giving to that speech the name of 'Ersch' or 'Yrisch' (Irish). The old reproach clung to the new title 'Ersch': and it was to be long before the racial animosity, thus expressed in the outward symbol of language, was to be forgotten in a more homogeneous Scotland. No better proof of this internal fissure can be found than in Dunbar's *Flyting with Kennedie*<sup>1</sup>, which is, in first intention, an expression of the feud between the English east and the Gaelic west. If the poem be, as we are asked to believe, a mere bout of rough fun, it is none the less interesting as evidence of the material which gave the best opportunities for mock warfare.

This break with the family name and historic association indicates, in a blunt way, a more fundamental change in the language itself. The causes which produced the one could not fail to influence the other. For 'Scots,' erst 'Ynglis,' had, for some time, lived apart: during more than two centuries there had been little intercourse with England by any of the peaceful methods which affect language most strongly; closer association had been enforced with the unreconciled Gaels within its area or with new friends beyond; generally, a marked differentiation had been established between the civilisations north and south of the Tweed. These considerations, among others, prepare us for the changes which soon become evident, though they may not be very helpful in explaining the details of these changes. It may be that some of them were longer in the making than our study of the few extant documents of the earlier period has led us to believe. We lack evidence of the extent of Scandinavian interference in the northern Angliic dialect, structural and verbal, and we know too little of the Anglo-French influences resulting from the Norman culture which had grown up in the Lothians. Yet, while

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter x.

allowing for possibilities, or probabilities, of this kind, we may conclude that, on the whole, the literary language of Scotland down to the early fifteenth century was in close conformity with the usage of northern England. The texts of Barbour and Hampole force us to accept this. Any qualification which may be made must be due, not to the testimony of facts (for they are wanting), but to an acknowledgment of the general principle that languages and dialects change slowly and that the differences in the latter part of the fifteenth century (to which we are about to refer) are too fundamental to have taken shape of a sudden.

A change in the habit of the literary language is discernible from the middle of the fifteenth century. It is definite and of general occurrence; and it continues with but few variations, which are due to the idiosyncrasies of writers or the circumstances of publication, down to the opening decades of the seventeenth century. To this period (1450—1620) the name of 'Middle Scots' has been given. The title is not altogether satisfactory, but it is the best that has been found; and it is useful in suggesting the special linguistic phase which intervened between earlier and later (or modern) Scots. It is applied only to the literary speech. The spoken language pursued its own course and showed fewer points of difference from both the literary and spoken dialects of northern England. When the middle period closes, spoken Scots is again restored to something of the dignity of a literary medium. This is said advisedly, for diversity of dialect and the lack of a fixed orthography in Modern Scots are the denial of the main characteristics of a standard instrument. In Middle Scots, on the other hand, the linguistic peculiarities are, with the allowances already noted, uniform within the period, and deliberately followed.

The name 'Early Scots,' for the period ending c. 1450, is even less satisfactory than 'Middle Scots' for the next (from 1450 to 1620); but it will do no harm if it be understood to be the literary language of Teutonic Scotland during the century and a half before 1450, when such differentiation from early northern English as may be assumed, but cannot readily be proved, was established. The names 'Northumbrian' and 'Early Northern English' may be applied to the still earlier stages. Of 'Early Scots' the typical examples are Barbour's *Bruce* and Wyntoun's *Chronicle*: of Middle Scots the writings of Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas and Lyndsay. In a more exhaustive scheme it is convenient to have an intervening 'Early Transition Period'—say from 1420 to 1460—represented by such important works as *The Kingis Quair*, *Lancelot of the Laik*, and *The Quare of Ielusy*. The linguistic basis of

these poems is Early Scots; but they show an artificial mixture with southern and pseudo-southern forms derived from Chaucer. Their language represents no type, literary or spoken; it is a bookish fabrication; but, though exceptional and individual, it has the historical interest of being the first expression of a habit which, in Middle Scots, was neither exceptional nor individual. In this transition period the foreign elements are exclusively Chaucerian: in Middle Scots, Chaucerian influence, though great and all pervading, is not the sole cause of the differences<sup>1</sup>.

The statement that Middle Scots is uniform throughout its many texts must not be misunderstood. Full allowance must be made, in each case, for the circumstances of composition and production. Translations from Latin or French will show a larger percentage of Romance forms; a dream-poem will attract more Chaucerian words and phrases and tricks of grammar; a recension of a southern text or the writing of a Scot in exile in England will 'carry over' certain southern mannerisms; French printers in Paris, or Chepman and Myllar's English craftsmen in Edinburgh, will bungle and alter; and poets like Gavin Douglas will deal in archaisms which even an educated contemporary might not readily understand. Yet these exceptions, and others which might be named, but prove the validity of the general rule.

Middle Scots stands in marked contrast with Early Scots in phonology and orthography, in accidents, in syntax and in vocabulary and word-forms. It is not desirable to attempt even an outline of each of these in this short chapter. The reader who wishes further acquaintance is referred to the bibliography. The remaining pages will be devoted to brief consideration of the main causes of change and of their relative importance in the transformation of the dialect, especially in the matter of vocabulary. The persistence of certain popular misconceptions; or overstatements, of the indebtedness of Scots justifies some discussion of the question in this place.

An artificial dialect such as is used by the greater Middle Scots poets is, in some respects, unaffected by the processes which mould a living speech<sup>2</sup>. It draws from sources which are outside the natural means of supply; it adopts consciously and in accordance

<sup>1</sup> It may be well to add that these 'transitional' texts are more strongly southern than are the later texts which continued the habit of borrowing.

<sup>2</sup> If the entire literature of the period (prose as well as verse), be considered, this impression of artificiality will, of course, be modified. This must always be so, even when eccentricity is more marked than it is in the present case. Yet we must not underestimate the importance of a habit which was, after all, followed by all Middle Scots writers who make any claim to literary style.

with a deliberately accepted theory of style. If it borrow the forms which come to all languages with the new things of the marketplace, it does so advisedly, just as it recovers the older forms which have been lost to ordinary speech. Books are its inspiration, and the making of books is its end. In this way the literary consciousness of an age as it appears in writers like Henryson and Dunbar is an index to its linguistic habit. When poets show a new pride in the vernacular and are concerned with the problems of poetic diction and form, their admiration of the models of style takes a very practical turn. Scottish literature, in the full enjoyment of a new fervour, showed the effect of its enthusiasm in the fashion of its language. In it, as in the Italian and Burgundian, the chief effort was to transform the simpler word and phrase into 'aureate' mannerism, to 'illumine' the vernacular, to add 'fresch anamalit termis celicall.' This Crétinism was the serious concern of the Scottish poets for at least a century, and even of prose-writers such as the author of *The Complaynt of Scotlande*, or Abacuck Byssset, so late as 1622. In the later stages of Middle Scots, and especially in the prose, other influences were at work, but the tradition established during the so-called 'golden age' still lingered.

• The chief modifying forces at work during the middle period are English, Latin and French. Others—say Celtic and Scandinavian—may be neglected, but the case for the former will be glanced at later.

• The southern, or English, influence, which is the strongest, is exerted in three ways. It comes through the study of Chaucer and the English 'Chaucerians'; through religious and controversial literature; and, lastly, through the new political and social relations with England, prior to and following the accession of James VI to the English throne. The first of these is the most important. In a later chapter, attention is drawn to the debt of the Scottish 'makars' to the southern poet and his followers for the sentiment and fabric of their verse. The measure of that debt is not complete without acknowledgment to Chaucer's language. The general effect on Middle Scots of this literary admiration was an increase in the Romance elements. It may be taken for granted that the majority of words of Anglo-French origin, which were incorporated at this time were Chaucerian; but it is not always easy to distinguish these words from the Anglo-French which had been naturalised in the early period. It must not be forgotten, especially in estimating the French contribution to Middle Scots (see *post*) that the most active borrowing from that quarter had been accomplished before this time. In

*The Kingis Quair* and *Lancelot*, which illustrate the first Chaucerian phase in Scots, the infusion is not confined to the vocabulary. Fantastic grammatical forms are common: such as infinitives in *-en* (even *-ine*), *weren* for *war*, past participles with *y-*, frequent use of final *-e*—all unknown and impossible to the northern dialect. In these cases there is no mistaking the writer's artifice and its source. Such freaks in accident are hardly to be found in the poetry of James IV's reign; though Gavin Douglas's eclectic taste allows the southern *ybound* and the nondescript *ysowpit*. In the verse of the 'golden age' it is the word, or tag, which is the badge of Chaucerian affectation. The prose shows little or nothing of this literary reminiscence. John of Ireland, whose writing is the earliest extant example of original Scots prose of a literary cast, speaks of 'Galfryde Chauceir' (by whom he really means Occleve), but exhibits no trace of his influence. When the Middle Scots prose-writer is not merely annalistic, or didactic, or argumentative, he draws his *aureat termis* from the familiar Latin. So, when *The Complaynt of Scotlande* varies from the norm, it is, in Rabelais's phrase, to 'despumate the Latial verbocination,' or to revel in onomatopoeia.

In the prose, the second and third English influences are more easily noted, and they are found towards the end of the period, when a general decadence has set in. Indeed, they are the chief causes of the undoing of Middle Scots, of breaking down the very differences which Chaucer, Latinity and (in a minor degree) French intercourse had accomplished. It is to be observed that the language of nearly all religious literature from the middle of the sixteenth century is either purely southern or strongly anglicised: it is worthy of special note that, until the publication of the Bassandyne Bible in 1576—9, all copies of the Scriptures were imported direct from England, and that the Bassandyne, as authorised by the reformed kirk, is a close transcript of the Genevan version. This must have had a powerful influence on the language, spoken and written. Even in Lyndsay, whose dialect is unmistakable, translated passages from the Vulgate are taken direct from the English text. The literary influence was strengthened by protestant controversialists, notably by Knox, perhaps the most 'English' of all Scottish prose-writers. This 'knapping' of 'sudroun' was one of the charges preferred against them by catholic pamphleteers—among others by John Hamilton, author of *Ane Catholik and Facile Traicteise* (1581), who even saw treason in the printing of Scottish books at London 'in contempt of our native language.'

The third English influence, latest in activity, emphasised these tendencies. It is easy to trace in state documents and in the correspondence of the court the intrusion of southern forms. *Sal* and *shall*, *till* and *to*, *quhilk* and *which*, participles in *-and* and *-ing*, *-it* and *-ed*, jostle each other continually. The going of the court to England, and the consequent affectation of English ways, undid the artificial Middle Scots which had been fashioned at, and for, that court. Poetry was transferred, almost *en bloc*, as if by act of the British Solomon, to the care of the southern muse: all the singers, Alexander, Aytoun, Drummond and the rest became 'Elizabethan' in language and sentiment, differing in nothing, except an occasional Scotticism, from their southern hosts. When Scottish literature revives in the mid-seventeenth century, and in the next is again vigorous, its language is the spoken dialect, the *agrest terminis* of the Lothians and west country<sup>1</sup>.

That the Romance contribution to Middle Scots is large is obvious; that it is found in writings which are not mere *tours de force* of 'aureate' ingenuity is also obvious. But the sorting out of the borrowings according to their origin has not been so clear to amateurs of Scots etymology. There has been no lack of speculation, which, in its generally accepted form, must be seriously traversed.

The non-Toutonic elements (excluding Celtic) are Latin and French. An exaggerated estimate of the political and social intercourse with France, and a corresponding neglect or depreciation of the position of Latin in Scottish culture, have given vogue to a theory of French influence on the language which cannot be accepted without serious modification. The main responsibility for the popular opinion that Scots is indebted, inordinately, to French must rest with the late Francisque Michel's *Critical Inquiry into the Scottish Language, with the view of illustrating the Rise and Progress of Civilisation in Scotland* (1882). It may be true that, 'to thoroughly understand Scottish civilisation, we must seek for most of its more important germs in French sources'; but certain important qualifications are necessary.

The French element in Middle Scots represents three stages of borrowing: first, the material incorporated in the early period during the process of Anglo-French settlement in the Lothians; next, the material, also Anglo-French in origin, drawn from Chaucer and the 'Chaucean' texts; and, finally, the material adopted from

<sup>1</sup> Some qualification is, of course, necessary in Ramsay's case. His antiquarian taste must be reckoned with by the philologist.

central French during the close diplomatic intercourse of the Scottish and French courts, and as a result of the resort of Scottish students to the university of Paris, and, later, of the national interest in Calvinistic protestantism. The last of these groups commends itself readily to the popular imagination: its plausibility is enforced by recalling the stories of the Scot abroad, of careers like Buchanan's, of the Quentin Durwards, and by pointing to the copies of French institutions in the College of Justice and the older universities. Yet, when all these are allowed for, the borrowings from this third source are the smallest in extent, and by no means important. From the second source, which is, in a sense, English (for the borrowings were already naturalised English words), the influx is much greater; but from the first, certainly the greatest.

So far as the vocabulary is concerned, nearly all the Romance elements in Middle Scots which cannot be traced to the first or second, the Anglo-French or Chaucerian source, are of Latin origin. Even many of the borrowings which are French in form and derived through French were taken direct from the *rhétoriciens* because they yielded a ready-made supply of aureate terms and helped the purposes of writers who, like Gavin Douglas, had set themselves to put and carve Latin for the betterment of the vernacular. It was of the nature of an accident that the media were French books. The forms appealed to the Latin-speaking, Latin-thinking Scot. Moreover, not a few of the words which are certainly French, such as the hackneyed *ashet* and *gigot*, belong to the period of Modern Scots; others, as *attour*, *boule*, which appear to yield evidence of French origin, are 'English' dialectal forms. When Francisque Michel refers the child-word *bae* to the bleat in *Fathelin* we begin to understand what a Frenchified thing Middle Scots must have been! Nor is it easy, even with the authority of another investigator<sup>1</sup>, to allow a French origin to certain well-known eccentricities of grammar and syntax in Middle Scots—badges of that period and of no other—the indefinite article and numeral *ane*, in all positions; the adjectival plural, e.g. *saidis*, *quhillis*; and the frequent placing of the adjective after the noun, e.g. *factis merciall*, *concepcioun virginale*, *inimy mortall*. The assumption that such a usage as *ane man* is an imitation of the French *un homme* is, in the first place, entirely unsupported by historical evidence; secondly, it shows a grammatical interference in a place where intrusion is least likely, or hardly possible.

<sup>1</sup> See J. A. H. Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland* (Historical Introduction).

In the case of the other alleged Gallicisms, criticism may be more constructive, for they may be explained (when they are not the outcome of verse necessity) as relics or reminiscences of Latin syntactical habit. The tradition of theological and legal Latin must be reckoned with; and the fact that the adjectival plural is admitted to be first found 'in legal verbiage' is an important link in the evidence.

So far, we have assumed that the Romance influence which is not Anglo-French or Chaucerian comes through Latin rather than French. We may strengthen this position by pointing to the ascertained importance of Latin in the moulding of Middle Scots. There is, in the first place, the direct testimony of contemporary writers to the vitality of Latin, which stands in remarkable contrast with their silence on the subject of French borrowing. The circumstances of the writer and the nature of his work must, of course, be considered. It is to be expected that, in a translation from Latin, or in treatises on theology, political science, or law, the infusion will be stronger than in an original work of an imaginative or descriptive cast. This consideration may affect our conclusion as to the average strength of the infusion, but it does not minimise the importance of the fact that Middle Scots was liable to influence from this quarter. The testimony of such different writers as John of Ireland, Gavin Douglas and the author of *The Complaynt of Scotlande* is instructive. John excuses his Scots style because he was 'thretty ȝeris nurist in fraunce, and, in the noble study of Paris in latyn tounge, and knew nocht the gret eloquens of chauncefr'na colouris þat men usis in þis Inglis melir.' Nor was he (we may be certain) the only Scot who, when it was a question of writing 'in the commoun langage of þis cuntre,' sought help from Latin, 'the tounge that [he] knew better.' Gavin Douglas allows the general necessity of 'bastard latyne, french, or inglis' to a progressive Scots, but he discusses the advantages of only the first, and shows that in his task of translating Vergil he must draw freely from Latin, if his work is not to be 'mank and mutilait' as Caxton's was. The author of *The Complaynt* says plainly that 'it is necessair at sum tyme til myxt oure langage vitht part of termis dreuyn fra lateen, be reson that oure scottis tong is nocht sa copeus as is the lateen tong.'

These confessions are amply supported by the texts. There we find not only words of unmistakable Latin lineage such as *translatory*, *praeternittit*, *ealiginus*, but others used in their Latin

sense, such as *prefferris* (excels), *pretendis* (aims at), and the like. Further, there is ample evidence of the process, at which Douglas clearly hints, that Latin was drawn upon without hesitation and without any attempt to disguise the borrowing. The word *manik* in the quotation already given is an illustration. It may be Old French (through Anglo-French), but its natural parent is *manus*. Examples of direct association with Latin are plentiful: here, two must suffice. 'Withoutin more or delay' is plain *sine mora aut dilacione*: no imaginary French 'more' intervenes. Even at the close of the period a man may be described in kirk minutes as 'apt and idoneus to enter the ministry.' In accident even, as in the uninflected past participle, e.g. *did fatigat, being deliberat, salbe repute*—a form which still lingers in Scottish legal style—the derivation from Latin is direct.

On the whole, therefore, the Romance material in Middle Scots, in so far as it is not Anglo-French, directly or mediately, is largely Latin. Central French is certainly represented in such words as *preaux* and *charpentier*, but they are in many cases *ἀπαξ λεγόμενα* or the liking of certain authors. To counterbalance this, it may be pointed out that in *The Complaynt of Scotlande*, that strange mosaic of verbatim translation from French with encyclopaedic digressions in Scots which are assumed to be original, the author is a more deliberate Latinist in the latter than he is when rendering the passages from the *rhétoriciens*. Here, again, it is the 'rhetorical' quality which attracts him to the French authors. He pays little heed to the French *timbre* of their work, and hastens, when he must be original, to find the closest imitation in diction of this sort.

Now for conclusion of this prolog, i exort the, gude redar, to correct me familiarly, ande be cherite, Ande til interpret my intention fauorablye, for doutles the motiōne of the compilatiōne of this tracteit procedis mair of the compassiōne that i hef of the public necessite nor it dois of presumptione or van glōir. thy chereitabil correctione maye be ane prouocatiōne to gar me studye mair attentiuelye in the pyxt verkis that i intend to set furth, the quhilk i beleif in gode sal be verray necessair tyl al them that desiris to lyue verteuouslye indurand the schort tyme of this oure fragil peregrinatiōne, & as fayr veil.

And this writer dares to call these words 'agrest termis,' and to add that he 'thocht it nocht necessair til hef fardit ande lardit this tracteit vitht exquisite termis, quhilkis ar nocht daly vait' and that he has employed 'domestic Scottis langage, maist intelligibil for the vulgare pepil.'

It has been argued that an additional cause of the differences

between Early and Middle Scots is to be found in Celtic. Interaction has been assumed because the Lowlander and Highlander were brought into a closer, though forced, association in a unified Scotland, or because the anti-English policy of the former, threw him back, no matter with what feelings, upon his northern and western neighbours. There are, however, serious objections to the general assumption and to the identification of many of the alleged borrowings from Celtic. In regard to the first, it must be kept in mind (a) that the only possible interaction, literary or otherwise, was with the Gaels of the west and south-west; (b) that the inhabitants of Strathclyde and Galloway were, to a certain extent, Romanised Celts; and (c) that race-antipathies, as shown in *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie*, were a strong barrier to linguistic give-and-take, especially in grammatical structure and orthography. On the marches there would be borrowing of words, perhaps even breaking down of inflections and phonetic change. There is evidence of such effects in the initial *f* for *quh* (*hw*) of the pronoun, at the Aberdeenshire end of the 'Highland line'; but changes of this kind do not affect the literary standard, or every dialect of the spoken language.

• The alleged contributions from Celtic are: (a) verbal and (b) orthographic, perhaps phonological. The first are admittedly of the slightest, and are being gradually reduced. In the second a contingency is assumed which, as in the case of central French interference, was the least likely to happen. • The closest intimacy is necessary before one language, especially that which is dominant, permits modifications of its grammatical and orthographic habit. Our chief authority on Lowland dialects<sup>1</sup> has described some of the salient variations of Middle Scots, 'in the form of words, and consequently in their written form,' as 'due mostly to Celtic influence.' While it may be admitted that Middle Scots was not 'founded upon precisely the same dialectic type as the written language of the early period,' it is by no means clear that *buik*, *moir*, *glaid*, etc. for older northern forms, the loss of *t* as in *indirect*, or its addition as in *witht*, the inserted mute *l* in *chalmer* (or *challmer*, as pronounced), *rolkis* (rocks) and *waltir* (water), the *h* in the past part as *desamet*, or in the adverb, as in *frawart*—that any of these things are the result of the Lowlander's unconscious affectation of 'Erch' speech. The *onus probandi* lies with the supporters of this view. At present no evidence has been produced: it will be surprising if it can be produced.

<sup>1</sup> *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland.*

## CHAPTER V

### THE EARLIEST SCOTTISH LITERATURE

BARBOUR, BLIND HARRY, HUCHOUN, WYNTOUN, HOLLAND

As has been indicated in the preceding chapter, it is probable that, from a very early period in the English colonisation of Britain, an English dialect was spoken from Forth to Tweed, which was, in most respects, practically indistinguishable from that spoken between the Tweed and the Humber. Even along the north-eastern coast, English was soon the language of the little towns that traded by sea. Before 1124, the communities of Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Forres, Nairn and Inverness had formed themselves into a miniature Hanseatic league, on which David I conferred sundry privileges. The inland country behind these communities remained for long in the hands of a Gaelic-speaking people. In the north of Aberdeenshire there is evidence that the harrying of Buchan, carried out by Robert the Bruce, in 1308, as part of his vengeance on his enemies the Comyns, introduced the English language to the inland districts, for in local documents the names of persons change speedily after that date from Gaelic to English.

Of a Scottish literature before the wars of independence there is no trace. In the period preceding the death of Alexander III, in 1286, Scotland was so prosperous that it is difficult to believe no such literature existed. But, as the dialect of Scotland was not yet differentiated from that south of the Tweed, such a literature, unless it took the form of chronicles or was of a strictly local character, could not easily be identified. It is noticeable that there is no lack of literature of which the scene is connected with Scotland. The romance of Sir Tristram, which is associated with the name of True Thomas, the mysterious seer of Erceldoune, is preserved only in a dialect which is not Scots. Though the Gawain cycle appears in different forms in different dialects, all of them seem to be English. Yet Gawain, according

to the legend, was prince of Galloway; and, as we shall see, there is some reason to connect some of these poems with a Scottish author. The contradiction, however, is more in appearance than in reality. If these poems were composed by a Scottish author, they were, undoubtedly, intended rather for recitation than for reading; and, even if they were meant to be read, a southern scribe would be certain to adapt the forms to his own dialect. This adaptation might be either intentional or unintentional. If intentional, the purpose would be to make the poem more easily intelligible to southern readers; if unintentional, it would typify the result which always ensues in all languages from the mechanical copying of an alien dialect.

In the Scots dialect itself, the political separation brought about by the wars of Wallace and Bruce produced considerable changes. The oldest fragments of the dialect are to be found in the phrases introduced for greater precision into the Latin laws of David I and his successors. In these, we hear of *blodewit*, *styn-gisdynt*, *herieth* and so forth, for which, in the later Scots version, are substituted *bludewyt*, *stokisdynt*, *hereyelde*. Till Scotland has become again an independent kingdom, such words as these, and the vernacular glosses on the hard words in a Latin lease, are all that survive to us of the old Scottish tongue. Of early continuous prose there are no remains. The earliest poetry extant appears in the few musical and pathetic verses on the death of Alexander III, which have been quoted a thousand times:

Quhen Alyandyr oure kyng was dede

That Scotland led in<sup>1</sup> l<sup>o</sup>ve and le,

• Away was sons<sup>1</sup> off ale and brede,

• Off wyne and wax, off gamyn and gle;

• Oure gold was changyd into lode,

• Czyst born into Vyggynyte

• Suffoure Scotland and remede

• That stad is in perplexyte.

Though preserved only by Wyntoun (c. 1420), they, no doubt, are not far removed from the original form of a hundred and fifty years earlier. In Fabyan's *Chronicle* are preserved some of the flouts and gibes at the English, baffled in the siege of Berwick and defeated at Bannockburn. But it is with Barbour, whose poem *The Bruce* is the triumphant chronicle of the making of the new kingdom of Scotland by Robert and Edward Bruce and the great 'James of Douglas,' that Scottish literature begins. As the national epic, coloured, evidently, to a large extent by tradition,

but written while men still lived who remembered Bannockburn and the good king Robert, it is entitled to the first place, even though conceivably some of the literature of pure romance be not less old.

In John Barbour, the author of *The Bruce*, we have a typical example of the prosperous churchman of the fourteenth century. As we may surmise from his name, he had sprung from the common folk. Of his early history we know nothing. We first hear of him in 1357, when he applies to Edward III for a safe-conduct to take him and a small following of three scholars to Oxford for purposes of study. By that date, he was already archdeacon of Aberdeen, and, as an archdeacon, must have been at least twenty-five years old. He probably was some years older. He died, an old man, in 1396, and we may reasonably conjecture that he was born soon after 1320. In those days there was no university in Scotland, and it may be assumed that the archdeacon of Aberdeen was, in all probability, proceeding in 1357 to Oxford with some young scholars whom he was to place in that university; for the Latin of the safe-conduct need not mean, as has often been assumed, that Barbour himself was to 'keep acts in the schools.' The safe-conduct was granted him at the request of 'David de Bruys,' king of Scotland, at that time a captive in king Edward's hands; and Barbour's next duty, in the same year, was to serve on a commission for the ransom of king David. Other safe-conducts were granted to Barbour in 1364, 1365 and 1368; that of 1365 allowing him to pass to St Denis in France, while, in 1368, he was allowed to cross into France for purposes of study. In 1372 and 1373, he was clerk of the audit of the king's household; and, in 1373, also one of the auditors of the exchequer. By the early part of 1376, *The Bruce* was finished; and, soon after, we find him receiving by command of the king (now Robert II) ten pounds from the revenues of the city of Aberdeen. In 1378, a pension of twenty shillings sterling from the same source was conferred upon him for ever—a benefaction which, in 1380, he transferred to the cathedral of Aberdeen, that the dean and canons might, once a year, say mass for the souls of his parents, himself and all the faithful dead. With northern caution, he lays down careful regulations as to how the dean is to divide the twenty shillings among the staff of the cathedral, not forgetting even the sacrist (the name still survives in Aberdeen), who tolled the bell. Other sums were paid to Barbour by the king's order from the revenues of Aberdeen, and, in 1388, his pension was raised by the king, 'for his

faithful service, to ten pounds, to be paid half-yearly at the Scottish terms of Whitsunday and Martinmas. He died on 13 March 1396. Like Chaucer, he received from the king (in 1390—1) the wardship of a minor, who lived in his parish of Rayne in Aberdeenshire. On at least one of the many occasions when he was auditor of the exchequer, Sir Hew of Eglintoun, who, as we shall see, is also reputed a poet, served along with him.

Such are the simple annals of John Barbour's life, as known to us. For thirty-eight years at least he was archdeacon of Aberdeen, then, probably, one of the most prosperous towns in the realm. Fortunately for itself, it was far removed from the border, and had not suffered so severely as most towns in the wars of liberation, though it had been visited by all the leading combatants, by Wallace, by Edward I and by Bruce. The records of the city, unfortunately, do not begin till a few years after Barbour's death. There is, however, some reason to believe that Barbour was not alone in his literary activity. To the same district and to the same period belong the *Lives of the Saints*, a manuscript discovered in the Cambridge University Library by Henry Bradshaw, who assigned the authorship to Barbour himself. From Wyntoun we learn that Barbour was the author of other works which are now lost. In many passages he refers to themes treated of in a quasi-historical poem, *The Brut*, which clearly, in matter, bore a close resemblance to Layamon's poem with the same title. To Barbour, Wyntoun attributes, also, another lost poem, *The Stewartis Oryginalle*, which carried back the genealogy of the Stewart kings from Robert II of Scotland to Ninus who built Nineveh—a *tour de force* excelled only by another Aberdonian, Sir Thomas Urquhart, the translator of Rabelais, who carried the genealogy of his family back to Adam himself. It was perfectly well known that the Stewarts were a branch of the ancient English house of FitzAlan; but, in the bitter feeling against England which by this time had come to prevail in Scotland, it was, no doubt, desirable to find another and more remote origin for the Scottish royal family. The feeling which led to the production of this fabulous genealogy is vouched for by the author of the *Lives of the Saints* already mentioned, who tells us, in the life of St Ninian, that a paralytic English lord desired his squire, who had brought home a Scot as prisoner, to put a knife in his mouth with the blade outward, that he might 'reave the Scot of his life.' This lord, having been dissuaded from his deed of murder, and

lovers separated by a fatal thunderbolt<sup>1</sup>. This is quickly succeeded by a passage on summer bathing, illustrated by the tale of Damon and Musidora, which, in its present form, is entirely altered, and altered for the worse, from the form which it assumed in the earliest draft of the poem<sup>2</sup>. The episode of Palemon and Lavinia in *Autumn* is a tale of harvest, modelled upon the history of Boaz and Ruth<sup>3</sup>. At their best, these stories are merely elegant decorations of Thomson's verse. Their popularity in their own day was due to an artificial taste which sought in such poetry the distractions of an unreal world, and tolerated the questionable morality and spurious sentiment of the story of Damon and Musidora, for the sake of its superficial prettiness.

Moral reflections, such as those upon love and jealousy suggested by the song of the birds in spring<sup>4</sup>, are among the incidental passages of *The Seasons*. No subject, however, was more congenial to Thomson than the glory of his country, and the patriotic enthusiasm excited by the prospect seen from Richmond hill in *Summer* was more than a conventional sentiment exacted by duty to the political sympathies of his friends and patrons. His convictions, on this head, found their earliest expression in the monologue *Britannia*, and were developed at tedious length in *Liberty*. In this poem, his art failed him, and the careful arrangement of topics which gave much variety to *The Seasons* was abandoned for the prolix discussion of a single theme. Stirred to his subject by the sight of the ruins of Rome, he indulged in a historical survey, related by Liberty herself, of her progress from Greece to Italy, her temporary eclipse in 'Gothic darkness,' and her revival at the renascence to find in Britain a field for her untrammelled sway. In her autobiography, Liberty displays a remarkable lack of modesty, and the width of her claims is the only original feature of Thomson's political philosophy. The poet himself plays the part of an admiring listener to her oration, making, from time to time, respectful interruptions which serve to let loose new floods of verbiage. He evidently grew weary of his task. The prophecy contained in the fifth book, awaited by a steadily decreasing number of subscribers, begins with an uninspired adaptation to Britain of Vergil's famous tribute to Italy in the second *Georgic*, and 'goes dispiritedly, glad to finish' to an abrupt and hurried end. After Thomson's death, Lyttelton, following, as he said, the author's own design, condensed the five books of

<sup>1</sup> *Summer*, ll. 1170 seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Autumn*, ll. 182 seq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ll. 1270 seq.

<sup>4</sup> *Spring*, ll. 959 seq.

*Liberty* into three. His rearrangement, when compared with the earlier text, is a symptom of the loose construction and redundancy of the original, which made such drastic treatment possible. Thomson's friend Murdoch appears to have set his face against the application of a similar process to *The Seasons*; but it must be owned that, even after all the revision which it underwent from the author himself, *The Seasons* is not without a considerable amount of repetition, which testifies to the limitations of Thomson's material.

Although *Liberty* was a failure, Thomson evidently intended to try his fortune once more with a patriotic poem. The ominous promise, recorded in *The Castle of Indolence*<sup>1</sup>, was not fulfilled, for a reason which must be found in *The Castle of Indolence* itself. The elaboration of this short poem occupied many years, and, even in its final condition, bears signs of incompleteness. Each of the two cantos ends abruptly with a homely realistic simile which forms an inappropriate conclusion to a romantic allegory. The poem might, indeed, have been extended to an indefinite length: its merit lies, not in the story which it contains, but in the polish of its style and the success with which Thomson, following a fixed model, contrived to display in it his own best qualities.

This poem (says the advertisement prefixed to it) being writ in the manner of *Spenser*, the obsolete words, and a simplicity of diction in some of the lines, which borders on the ludicrous, were necessary to make the imitation more perfect. And the stile of that admirable poet, as well as the measure in which he wrote, are, as it were, appropriated by Custom to all allegorical Poems writ in our language; just as in *French* the stile of *Marot*, who lived under *Francis i.*, has been used in tales, and familiar epistles, by the politest writers of the age of *Louis xiv.*

Already, in 1742, Shenstone had attempted, in *The School-Mistress*, to imitate Spenser's

language, his simplicity, his manner of description, and a peculiar tenderness of sentiment remarkable throughout his works.

Thomson's poem, however, had been conceived at an earlier date than Shenstone's. It shows, not merely an admiration of the external qualities of Spenser's verse, but some intimacy with his methods of description and personification. At the same time, the use of the Spenserian stanza, of obsolete words and of a studied simplicity of diction, could not repress the characteristic tastes of the poet of *The Seasons*. In the habit of poetical inversion Milton stood between Spenser and Thomson; and Thomson had assimilated this habit so thoroughly that *The Castle of Indolence* could hardly

<sup>1</sup> *The Castle of Indolence*; canto 1, st. 32.

fail to be leavened with it. With Spenser, the employment of obsolete words, if, primarily, an affectation, became an essential feature of his poetry. With Thomson, it was purely a quaint imitation of Spenser: his old-fashioned words were dragged in as a necessity, and the poem would lose none of its attractiveness without them.

The point at which Thomson most closely approaches Spenser is in the deliberate movement and varied melody of his stanza. Otherwise, it may fairly be claimed that his resemblance to his model is of the most general kind. The landscape with which the poem opens is his highest achievement in that type of description, combining soft colour with suggestions of perfume and sound, with which *The Seasons* has made us familiar. There is little emphasis on small details: effects of colour, of light and shadow, are conveyed in such general and inclusive phrases as

gay castles in the clouds that pass,  
For ever flushing round a summer-sky<sup>1</sup>.

If, in such passages, the luxurious beauty of Spenser's descriptions is reflected, it is rather in their form than in their contents. Here, once more, the influence of Milton in poetry, of 'savage *Rosa*' and 'learned *Poussin*' in painting, are too strong to make insistence on detail possible. In his personifications, Thomson comes nearer to Spenser. The incidental persons, the 'comely full-spread porter'<sup>2</sup> and his 'little roguish page'<sup>3</sup>, the diseases of body and mind in the dungeon of the castle<sup>4</sup>, 'the fiery-footed boy, benempt *Dispatch*'<sup>5</sup>, who is page to the Knight of Arts and Industry, are portraits which have Spenser's power of giving individual being to abstract qualities. On the other hand, the chief portraits of *The Castle of Indolence*, the sketches of the friends of the poet as inhabitants or visitors of the castle<sup>6</sup>, suggested though they may have been by Spenser's habit of interweaving traits of his contemporaries with his personified abstractions, were drawn with a personal feeling which owed little to imitation. Written by one who has himself fallen under the dominion of the enchanter, the poem has a note of confession and complaint which gives its contents a special interest, apart from questions of derived form and style.

The slightness of *The Castle of Indolence* and its allegory do not bear comparison with the sustained complication of the fable which Spenser made the vehicle of his high philosophy. Thomson's imagination was unrefined by exalted philosophical thought, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Castle of Indolence*, canto I, st. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* st. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* st. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* st. 78 seq.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* canto II, st. 82.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* canto I, st. 57 seq.

his poem is certainly not improved by excursions into conventional moralising. The eleven stanzas of perverted morality, which are sung with an energy foreign to his character by Indolence as he sits at the gate of his castle<sup>1</sup>, do not add anything to the allegory, but simply mark a breathing-space between the opening description and the admirable remainder of the first canto. With the appearance, in the second canto, of the 'generous imp of fame'<sup>2</sup> whose vigorous accomplishments are to be fatal to the wizard's abode, Thomson was easily betrayed into paths which his muse had trodden bare. After a life passed in varied climes, the Knight of Arts and Industry has at length found his proper home in Britain, encircled by the protection of Britannia's thunder on the main, and aided in his efforts by Liberty, 'th' Eternal Patron<sup>3</sup>, who handsomely atones for her overpowering egoism in an earlier poem by allowing him to encroach upon her extensive functions. The mechanic arts, the learning, the constitution of Britain, meet with due compliment. Threatened by the minions of Indolence, they are protected by the knight, who sets out to overthrow the castle. The song of the bard Philomelus, tuned to the British harp, stands in contrast to the song of Indolence, and proceeds through its fifteen stanzas with equal smoothness and fluency<sup>4</sup>. Supreme Perfection is invoked from the point of view which, in the concluding hymn of *The Seasons*, sees 'life rising still on life, in higher tone' to absorption with deity. The examples of Greece and Rome and of the great poets are cited to encourage the energy which is the antithesis to slothful repose. A contrast is drawn between health and disease, and a final exhortation to the use of godlike reason has the desired effect of stirring the knight's followers to the attack. While these sentiments are polished with the care which distinguishes the whole poem, they are drawn from a stock-in-trade which Thomson and his contemporaries had well-nigh exhausted, and their commonplace nobility is at the very opposite pole to the grave philosophy of Spenser or to Milton's lofty morality.

Thomson's dramatic work consists of five tragedies and the masque of *Alfred*, written in conjunction with Mallet. He had no special talent for the stage, and, at a period when rhetoric was the chief ambition of the dramatist, Thomson's rhetoric has no distinguishing excellence. His dramas are devoid of characterisation; his characters are vehicles of lofty sentiment, the prevailing tone

<sup>1</sup> *The Castle of Indolence*, canto I, st. 9 seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* canto II, st. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* st. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* st. 47 seq.

of which is the belligerent patriotism of the party to which Thomson was sincerely devoted. *Sophonisba*, however, the earliest of the tragedies, is without noticeable political bias. It is simply a classical drama of the conventional type. Its subject, to be sure, is patriotic, and its choice of a queen who died for her country may have been intended to spur the queen, to whom it was dedicated, to free herself from an influence to which Thomson's associates were bitterly opposed. There can be no question as to the meaning of the later plays. Between *Sophonisba* and the production of *Agamemnon*, there was an interval of nine years. It is easy to read into the characters of Clytemnestra and Egisthus the queen and the minister whom the prince's coterie was bent on deposing. The Orestes of *Agamemnon* was flattered more openly in *Alfred*, which was played before the prince and princess at Cliveden in 1740; while the application of *Edward and Eleonora* was so obvious that it was rejected for the stage. *Agamemnon* and *Edward* were published with dedications to the princess of Wales; the last of the political plays, *Tancred and Sigismunda*, was inscribed to the prince himself. *Coriolanus*, posthumously produced, is a return to pure tragedy without party bias. It may fairly be said that not one of these plays has the least dramatic interest. Their blank verse, however, is, as might be expected, easy and fluent. Thomson, possibly in imitation of the constant habit of the later Jacobean and Caroline dramatists, permitted himself a free use of weak endings to his lines, a practice which may promote ease in delivery, but becomes monotonous to the reader. His rhetoric is respectable; but the nobility of sentiment which it clothes is not above the ordinary level of the conventional sentiment of the classical drama of his day, and provokes no striking bursts of eloquence. His subjects do not afford scope for his gift of natural description, and there is only an occasional touch to remind us that his true genius lay in his appreciation of natural atmosphere and colour. His philosophy, on the other hand, is frequently introduced, but without any material addition to the contents of the passages in which its vague principles had been embodied in *The Seasons*. On the whole, the main interest of the plays is the debt which they owe directly to Greek tragedy, and not merely to the antique drama through the medium of the French stage. This virtue may, to some extent, be claimed for *Agamemnon*; it cannot be denied to *Edward and Eleonora*, where the self-sacrifice of Eleanor of Castile is imitated at first hand from the devotion of Alcestis, and the famous description of

the *Cressida* queen's farewell to life is almost translated in the narrative given by Daraxa to the earl of Glöster. Otherwise, the dramas fail to offer any special feature that raises them above the ordinary competence of their time; they are deficient in action, and their division into five acts is a theatrical convention which only emphasises the poverty of their construction. The masque of *Alfred*, the greater part of which, in its first form, seems to have been supplied by Mallet, was afterwards rewritten by Thomson, and the music, 'excepting two or three things which being particularly Favourites at Cliefdon, are retained by Desire,' was 'new-composed' by Arne'. Among the lyrics to which Arne provided new music for the edition of 1753 was *Rule, Britannia*, the sentiments of which embody Thomson's enthusiasm for his country and liberty in its most compact form.

The influence of Thomson was strongly felt by the younger generation of poets: by Collins, who dedicated a beautiful *Ode* to his memory, and by Gray, in whose work reminiscences of the elder poet are frequent. The vogue of *The Seasons* was followed by a period in which blank verse, such as Thomson had employed, was used with some fluency and skill for the treatment of rural subjects. Milton was the original model on which this type of verse was founded, and the example of John Philips, '*Pomona's* bard,' was felt in the choice both of metre and of subject. Somerville, in his preface to *The Chace*, defends his blank verse against 'the gentlemen, who are fond of a gingle at the close of every verse.'

For my own part (he adds), I shall not be ashamed to follow the example of Milton, Philips, Thomson, and all our best tragic writers.

- William Somerville, born in 1675, was a year older than Philips and twenty-five years older than Thomson; but it was not until 1735 that he published *The Chace*, by virtue of which his name survives. He was educated at Winchester and New college, Oxford, and was elected fellow of New college. On succeeding to the family estate of Edstone, near Henley-in-Arden, he settled down to a life in which the ordinary occupations of a country gentleman were varied by the study and composition of poetry. Much of his verse is poor doggerel in the form of fables and tales, dull and coarse after the usual manner of such productions. But Somerville was a scholar and something of a critic. His *Occasional*

<sup>1</sup> Title-page of the 1753 edition of *Alfred*.

## 110 Thomson and Natural Description in Poetry

*Poems* (1727) contain appreciative verses addressed to Addison and Pope; he enjoyed the friendship of Allan Ramsay, and criticised the 'rude notes' of the youthful Jago. In a set of couplets, he welcomed the first edition of *The Seasons* in a tone of patronage which, if justified by his age, was hardly warranted by his own poetry. Prophesying a great future for the young poet, he regretted that his muse should 'want the reforming toilet's daily care,' and urged him to abandon novelties of diction which, dangerous in southern poets, became all the more so 'when minted on the other side of Tweed.'

Read Phillips much, consider Milton more;  
But from their dross extract the purer ore<sup>1</sup>.

Somerville himself had nothing to teach Thomson; and his *Chace*, when it appeared, shows the influence of the verse of *The Seasons*, or, at any rate, a strong inclination to come into line with it. The poet's 'hoarse-sounding horn' invited the prince of Wales, the friend of Lyttelton and the patron of Thomson,

to the Chace, the sport of kings;  
Image of war, without its guilt<sup>2</sup>.

After a short sketch of the history of hunting from the rude but thorough methods of Nimrod to the days of William the conqueror, and a compliment to Britain, the 'fair land of liberty,' as the true home of horse and hound, the country gentlemen of Britain are summoned to hear the poet's instructions upon his favourite sport. He discusses at length, and with much practical knowledge and good sense, the position and proper design of the kennels, with the advice, not inapplicable to a day when Palladian symmetry was being pursued to excess by the architects of country houses and their out-buildings, 'Let no Corinthian pillars prop the dome<sup>3</sup>.' The habits of hounds, the best breeds—a subject which gives Somerville the true hunter's opportunity to express his contempt for coursing<sup>4</sup>—and the mysteries of scent conclude the first book. Hare-hunting is the main subject of the second and fox-hunting of the third; but Somerville was not a mere sportsman, and his literary digressions and allusions to the great Mogul's battue of wild beasts 'taken from Monsieur Bernier, and the history of Gengiscan the Great<sup>5</sup>,' and to the story of the tribute of wolves' heads imposed

<sup>1</sup> *Epistle to Mr Thomson, on the first edition of his Seasons.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Chace*, bk i, ll. 13—15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* l. 143.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ll. 227—30.

<sup>5</sup> Argument to *The Chace*, bk ii. *The Voyage of François Bernier (1625—88)*, who had been for a time physician to Aurangzebe the great, was published in 1699.

by Edgar, show that he followed his own advice and spent days on which sport was impossible in improving converse with his books. From one of these digressions upon oriental methods of hunting, his 'devious muse' is recalled, with an appropriate reference to Denham's *Cooper's Hill* and a flattering eulogy of the royal family, to Windsor and the king's buckhounds; and the third book ends with an example of royal clemency to the stag and a compliment to the throne. The concluding book contains instructions upon breeding and the art of training puppies, from which a transition is made to the diseases of hounds and the fatal effect of bites. Otter-hunting concludes the series of descriptions, and is followed by a final congratulation, in the spirit of Vergil's *O fortunatos nimium*, on the felicities of the hunter in his unambitious country life.

*The Chace* was followed a few years later by the short poem entitled *Rural Sports*, also dedicated to the prince of Wales. *Hobbinol*, a burlesque narrative in blank verse, dedicated to Hogarth, was inspired by Philips's *Splendid Shilling*, and is a lively account of the quarrelsome May games of some rustics in the vale of Evesham. In his preface, as in that to *The Chace*, Somerville indulged in a short critical explanation of his chosen form of verse, and defined his burlesque as 'a satire against the luxury, the pride, the wantonness, and quarrelsome temper, of the middling sort of people,' which he condemned as responsible for the decline in trade and the depressed condition of the rural districts. These poems do not add anything to the qualities displayed in *The Chace*, and the mock heroics of *Hobbinol* are unduly prolonged into three cantos. Somerville, however, was always lively in description; he knew his subject, whether he wrote of sport, or of the amusements of the Gloucestershire rustic 'from Kiftsgate to remotest Henbury', and he had a genuine feeling for classical poetry. Philips appears to have been his favourite English author, appealing to his rural tastes and to his particular vein of somewhat coarse humour. Natural description is purely incidental to his verse; but the scene and atmosphere of the various forms of sport which he described are suggested in adequate general terms<sup>2</sup>. Where he approaches detail, as in his description of unfavourable weather for hunting, the resemblance

<sup>1</sup> *Hobbinol*, canto 1, l. 246.

<sup>2</sup> It may be mentioned that *The Chace* was a favourite of Mr Jorrocks in the sporting novel *Handley Cross*, where several quotations from it occur which have become familiar to readers who know nothing about Somerville's poem.

of his methods to those of Thomson is noticeable. Like Thomson, he was fond, as has been noticed, of oriental and of patriotic digressions. His tendency to moralising is slight when compared with Thomson's, and from quasi-religious rhapsody he was as entirely free as he was from Thomson's sympathy with the victims of the chase. His poems are in no sense dull reading; but his blank verse, suave and regular, is somewhat monotonous, and is seldom broken by any variation of accent, such as that frequent employment of a trochee in the first foot of a line which gives variety of movement to the verse of *The Seasons*.

In the *Edge-Hill* of Richard Jago, a strong taste for moralising was combined with appreciation of 'Britannia's rural charms, and tranquil scenes'.<sup>1</sup> Warwickshire, a fertile nurse of poets, was his native county and provided him with his subject. His father, a member of a Cornish family, was rector of Beaudesert near Henley-in-Arden, where Jago was born in 1715. Somerville, whose estate Edstone lay some three miles distant, was a friend of his boyhood.<sup>2</sup> At Solihull, where he went to school, he made the friendship of Shenstone, a year his senior, which he continued to share at Oxford and long afterwards.<sup>3</sup> He entered University college as a servitor, and, about 1739, took holy orders and became curate of Snitterfield near Stratford-on-Avon. In 1746, he was presented to the vicarage of Harbury, with which he held the perpetual curacy of the neighbouring church of Chesterton. To these, he added, in 1754, the vicarage of Snitterfield; and, in 1771, resigning Harbury vicarage, he was presented to the rectory of Kimcote near Lutterworth. He retained his three livings until his death in 1781. He was buried at Snitterfield.

His poems consist of a few miscellaneous pieces, an oratorio called *Adam*—a canto from *Paradise Lost* intended to combine the passages of that poem most suitable for music—and *Edge-Hill*. The design of the last poem is very simple. In four books, he describes the prospect of Warwickshire as seen at various times in the day from the famous ridge which separates the vale of the Cherwell from the plain through which the Avon flows to meet the Severn. At morning, he looks westward over the vale of Red Horse to Stratford and Alcester. At noon, afternoon and evening, from different standpoints on the hill, his eye, to some

<sup>1</sup> *Edge-Hill*, bk i, l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ll. 365—70.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.* bk iii, ll. 855 seq., and the stanzas *To William Shenstone, esq. on receiving a gilt pocket-book*, 1751, and *The Goldfinches, an elegy. To William Shenstone, esq.*

extent aided by imagination, roams over other portions of the county and dwells upon its principal towns and gentlemen's seats. These comprehensive panoramas are broken up by a large amount of digressive morality; and a large portion of the third book is a scientific discourse on the theory of sight, addressed to Lord Clarendon, and pointed by an extremely long, if appropriate, anecdote of a blind youth restored to sight by the help of a gentle friend named Lydia. When the fourth book has run a third of its course, and the survey of Warwickshire has been completed by compliments to the owners of Arbury and Packington, Jago turns the sober evening hour to account by reviewing the scene 'with moral eye,' and descants upon the instability of human affairs. This is well illustrated by the death of the seventh earl of Northampton, the master of Compton Wynyates—an allusion which shows that this part of the poem, at any rate, was written in 1763; and the local calamity introduces the chief memory of the place, the battle of Edge-hill and the lessons and warnings to be derived from it. Jago's moralising has a distinctly religious end. His master was Milton, whose phraseology he copies closely and even borrows, although, in such lines as

Nature herself bids us be serious<sup>1</sup>,

his ear can hardly be said to have caught the charm of Milton's verse. His topography is conscientious: he mentions every country seat of any importance in the county, and adds footnotes with the owners' names. In such passages, he may have felt the influence of Thomson; but his catalogues have little picturesqueness or colour; while his verse, although it is not without the accent of local association, is typical, as a whole, of the decadence of the Miltonic method of natural description in the eighteenth century. Every group of trees is a grove, every country house a dome, and every hill a precipice. The classicism of the renaissance has degenerated into a fixed and stilted phraseology.

As he looks from Edge-hill to the distant Cotswolds, Jago refers to the *Monody* written by George Lyttelton in 1747 to the memory of his wife, Lucy Fortescue, whose home was at Ebrington near Chipping Campden. Lyttelton, the son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley, Worcestershire, was the friend of Pope, Thomson and Shenstone, and his house at Hagley was a favourite resort of men of letters. His life was largely political. Born in 1709, and educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, he made

<sup>1</sup> *Edge-Hill*, bk iv, l. 254.

the usual grand tour, and entered parliament as member for Okehampton in 1735. He was a prominent supporter of the 'patriotic' party against Walpole, and, after Walpole's fall, became a lord of the treasury. In 1751, he succeeded to his father's baronetcy, and, in 1756, after his retirement from a short tenure of the chancellorship of the exchequer, was created baron Lyttelton of Frankley. He died in 1773. His later years saw the publication of *Dialogues of the Dead* and of his *History of the Life of Henry II.* But at no season of his life was literature entirely neglected. He wrote poetry at Eton and Oxford; on his foreign tour, he addressed epistles in couplets to his friends at home; and, soon after his return, he appears to have composed the four eclogues called *The Progress of Love*. His poems include some songs and stanzas, of which the best are those addressed to his wife. His affection for her is a pleasing trait in a character which excited genuine devotion in his friends; and his *Monody*, composed in irregular stanzas, with a motto taken from Vergil's description of the lament of Orpheus for Eurydice<sup>1</sup>, is written with some depth of feeling, although its reminiscences of *Lycidas* invite a comparison which it cannot sustain. The influence of French literature presides over his imaginative prose works: the very titles of the satiric *Persian Letters*, written in his youth, and the more mature but less sprightly *Dialogues of the Dead*, are copied from Montesquieu and Fénelon, their contents suffering from the usual inferiority of imitations. The graver tone of his later work, as distinguished from his licence of thought and expression in the letters of the Persian Selim from England to Mirza and Ibrahim Mollac at Ispahan, is due to his change of opinion from deism to Christianity. He flattered himself that his *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St Paul*, which took the form of a letter to Gilbert West, translator of Pindar, brought about the conversion of Thomson on his death-bed. However this may have been, the mutual attachment between himself and Thomson calls for some mention of him in this place. He is said to have supplied the stanza which characterises the poet in *The Castle of Indolence*<sup>2</sup>; he wrote the prologue, recited by Quin, to the posthumous *Coriolanus*, and, as we have seen, he put a liberal interpretation upon his duties as Thomson's executor. In this connection, it is interesting to

<sup>1</sup> *Ipse, cava solans*, etc. (*Georgic iv*, 464—6).

<sup>2</sup> *The Castle of Indolence*, canto i, st. 68. The first line, 'A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems,' is Thomson's own.

remember the criticism of Thomson which Lyttelton introduced in the most valuable of the *Dialogues of the Dead*. In answer to a question by Boileau, Pope says:

Your description points out Thomson. He painted nature exactly, and with great strength of pencil. His imagination was rich, extensive, and sublime: his diction bold and glowing, but sometimes *obscure* and *affected*. Nor did he always know when to *stop*, or what to *reject*,... Not only in his plays, but all his other works, there is the purest *moral*ity, animated by *piety*, and rendered more touching by the fine and delicate sentiments of a most *tender* and *benevolent* heart<sup>1</sup>.

Lyttelton's early poems show him to have followed in the footsteps of Pope, and the letters written to his father from France and Italy are mainly concerned with foreign politics; the only prolonged passage of description in them is a formal account in French of his journey across Mont-Cenis. In 1756, he wrote two letters to the historian Archibald Bower, describing a journey in north Wales. The master of Hagley, by this time, had developed a strong taste for scenery. His descriptions are excellent and accurate, and he visited the castles of Wales with the enthusiasm of a historian, although he fell into the error of imagining that the ruins of Rhuddlan were those of a castle built by Henry II. The beauty of the valleys charmed him; the situation of Powis castle, the vales of Festiniog and Clwyd, the wooded shores of the Menai straits and the view of the Dee valley from Wynnstay, excited him to enthusiasm. Bala seemed to him an oasis in the desert of Merionethshire, 'a solitude fit for Despair to inhabit.' Snowdon filled him with 'religious awe' rather than admiration, and its rocks excited 'the idea of Burnet, of their being the fragment of a demolished world.' It is characteristic of the taste of his day that the magnificent prospect of the Carnarvonshire mountains from Baron hill above Beaumaris, on which Suckling had looked more than a century before, seemed to Lyttelton inferior to the view of Plymouth sound and Dartmoor from mount Edgcumbe. The love of nature in her wilder moods was not yet part of English literature. 'Nature,' said Lyttelton of the Berwyn mountains, 'is in all her majesty there; but it is the majesty of a tyrant, frowning over the ruins and desolation of a country.'

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogues of the Dead*, xiv.

## CHAPTER VI

### GRAY

THOMAS GRAY; a poet whose influence upon subsequent literature was largely in excess of the volume of his published works, was born in Cornhill, 26 December 1716. His father, Philip Gray, was an exchange broker, but seems to have combined with this other and more hazardous pursuits. He was a selfish, despotic, ill-tempered man, passionate even to the verge of lunacy. He owned the house in which the poet was born, and, about the year 1706, let it, and the shop connected with it, to two sisters, Mary and Dorothy Antrobus, milliners. At the same date, approximately, he married Dorothy and came to live with her and Mary. Thomas Gray was the fifth and only surviving child of this marriage; the rest, to the number of seven, died in infancy; and his own life was saved by the prompt courage of his mother, who opened one of his veins with her own hand.

Dorothy Gray had two brothers, Robert and William Antrobus. Robert was a fellow of Peterhouse, and had a considerable reputation at Cambridge. He was Gray's first teacher, not only in classical knowledge, but, also, in the study of natural history, especially botany, and imbued his nephew with a life-long passion for scientific observation of the minutest kind in almost every department of vegetable and animal life. Robert Antrobus was sometime assistant master at Eton, but had probably resigned before Gray entered the school in 1727. The poet's tutor there was William, Robert's younger brother.

During the earlier part of his stay at Eton, Gray, probably, was housed with his uncle Robert, then residing in retirement either in the town or in the college precincts. As an oppidan, the delicate boy had not to endure the hardships of the collegier, and the horrors of Long Chamber. His chief friend there, in the first instance, was Horace, son of Sir Robert Walpole, the prime

minister, of whose wife his cousin Dorothy was a humble intimate. Another of his Eton contemporaries was Richard West, son of the lord chancellor of Ireland, and grandson of bishop Burnet. At Eton, West was accounted the most brilliant of the little coterie formed by the three and Ashton, afterwards fellow of King's and of Eton, and called the quadruple alliance. A scholar, with a thin vein of poetry, West was absent-minded, with a tendency to melancholy, to some extent resembling Gray's own, and he died prematurely in 1742.

The year 1734 brought a dislocation of the alliance. Gray went for a time to Pembroke college, Cambridge<sup>1</sup>, pending his admission to Peterhouse in July. In March 1735, West went to Christ Church, Oxford, whence he wrote to Gray, 14 November 1735 :

Consider me very seriously here in a strange country inhabited by things that call themselves doctors and masters of arts; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown.

But, as a matter of fact, all these young Etonians exhibit a petulance for which youth is the only excuse ; and Gray himself writes 'It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly.' Then follows the splenetic outburst :

Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known as Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said 'the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall build there, and satyrs shall dance there; their forts and towers shall be a den for ever, a joy of wild asses; there shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch and gather under her shadow; it shall be a court of dragons; the screech owl also shall nest there, and find for herself a place of rest.'

But he was saved from the temptation to dilettantism, which beset his friends, by the scientific bias which his uncle Robert had given him, and which would have found quick recognition and encouragement in the Cambridge of another day. Late in life, he regretted his early neglect of mathematics, and dreamt even then of pursuing it, while he lamented that it was generally laid aside at Cambridge so soon as it had served to get men a degree.

His vacations were chiefly spent at Burnham, where, at Cant's hall, he stayed with his uncle Rogers, his mother's brother-in-law, a solicitor fond of sport, or of the habits of sport. Gray, however, had some little literary companionship :

<sup>1</sup> From this brief sojourn we may probably date the beginning of his friendship with Thomas Wharton ('dear dear' Wharton).

We have old Mr Southern, at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us; he is now seventy-seven years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at least I persuade myself so when I look at him, and think of *Isabella* and *Oroonoko*.

This interesting letter serves also to explain to us the lines towards the conclusion of the *Elegy*. He writes:

My comfort amidst all this is that I have at the distance of half-a-mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do may venture to climb, and craggs that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were dangerous: Both vale and hill are covered with the most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds,

And as they bow their hoary tops relate,  
In murmuring sounds, the dark decrees of fate;  
While visions, as poetic eyes avow,  
Cling to each leaf, and swarm on every bow<sup>1</sup>.

At the foot of one of these squats Me I (*il penseroso*) and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning.

It seems that Gray's first destination, so far as it was definite, was the law (as was also West's); for, so early as December 1736, he writes to his friend: 'You must know that I do not take degrees<sup>2</sup>.' He lingered at Cambridge, somewhat aimlessly. However, this inertia was dispelled by a journey abroad which he undertook in company with Walpole. His first extant letter from Amiens is written to his mother and tells how, on 29 March N.S. 1739, the friends left Dover. At Paris, Walpole goes out to supper with his cousin Lord Conway; but Gray, though invited too, stops at home and writes to West. He was, however, delighted to dine 'at my Lord Holderness's' with the abbé Prévost, whom he knows as the author of *L'Histoire de M. Cleveland, fils naturel de Cromwel*, while omitting to mention *Manon Lescaut*. He saw in tragedy MacGaussin who had been Voltaire's Zaire; saw, also, with Walpole, Racine's *Britannicus*, and, in 1747, reminded him of the grand simplicity of diction and the undercurrent of design

<sup>1</sup> If Gray's own, these are the earliest of his original English verses which we possess. The last two lines are frequently quoted by Hazlitt.

<sup>2</sup> In June 1738, he begins a sapphic ode to West (*Favonius*)

*Barbaras aedes aditure mecum,  
Quas Eris semper sovet iniquita,  
Lis ubi latè sonat, et togatum  
Æstuat agmen.*

which they had admired in the work. His own fragmentary *Agrippina* (1747 c.) is, structurally, borrowed from this tragedy<sup>1</sup>.

From Paris, the travellers went to Rheims. Gray's grand tour is illustrated by him in a double set of notes, sometimes 'bones exceeding dry' of quotations from Caesar in France, or Livy on the Alps; he draws less frequently than Addison from Latin poets, but still frequently enough; and records his impressions of architecture, and especially of painting; and we note among other evidences of his independence of judgment that he finds Andrea del Sarto anything but 'the *faultless* painter.' In this adverse judgment, he is seconded by Walpole, who comes nearer to Gray in artistic than in any other tastes.

On their way into Piedmont, Gray received, from his first view of mountain scenery, impressions which, on his return to England, remained for a while dormant, but had been wakened again when he wrote in *The Progress of Poesy* of scenes

Where each old poetic mountain  
Inspiration breath'd around.

On 24 April 1741, the pair set out from Florence, intending to go together to Venice, there to see the doge wed the Adriatic on ascension day. At Reggio, they quarrelled. It would seem that the discrepancy in their tastes became more and more a trial to both; and they were alike open in their comments on one another to their common friend Ashton, who disclosed Gray's to Walpole. Ashton did not display any particular displeasure with Gray at the time, but was put up by Walpole, in the interview at which a reconciliation was at last brought about, to affect that Gray's letter had roused his anger. Walpole was left at Reggio, and would have died there of quinsy but for the kind aid of Spence, the friend of Pope. Gray went with two new friends, made at Florence, to Venice, and thence took his homeward way. He paid a second visit to the Grande Chartreuse, and it was probably on this occasion that he left in the album of the fathers the beautiful alcaic ode *O tu severi Religio loci*, of which a fine English version has been composed by R. E. E. Warburton<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Compare, with the union of Junia and Britannicus (Racine), that of Otho and Poppaea (Gray), Nero's passion being the obstacle in both cases. Nero overhears a conversation in both Racine and Gray; the place of Burrhus is taken by Seneca; the false Narcissus reappears in Anicetus, Agrippina's confidante Albina in Acconzia.

<sup>2</sup> The later story of Gray's alcaics is curious. Mitford sought the original in vain at the monastery. He says that collectors who followed in the wake of the French revolutionary armies made away with it. But we find that a certain Mrs Bigg, when resident in France, was arrested in the reign of terror, and a copy of Gray was found in her possession. The opening line, *O tu severi Religio loci*, suggested to the Jacobin investigators the comment: *Apparemment ce livre est quelque chose de fanatique.*

On 7 September 1741, we find Gray in London, causing a sensation among the street boys 'by the depth of his Ruffles, the immensity of his Baggs, and the length of his sword.' He was still in town in April 1742, maintaining a correspondence with West, then ruralising in quest of health at Pope's house near Hatfield in Hertfordshire, on Tacitus and on the fourth *Dunciad*, which had just appeared. The yawn of Dulness at the end Gray describes as among the finest things Pope has written; and this young unknown critic here sounds the first note of discriminating praise, which has since been repeated by all good judges, from Johnson to Thackeray. In the same letter, he enclosed the first example of English verse which we certainly know to be his, a fragment of *Agrippina*, a tragedy never completed, of which Mason discovered the general design among Gray's papers. As has been already seen, it is manifest that, in *Agrippina*, Racine's *Britannicus* was to have been copied with almost Chinese exactness, just as Gray's details, like Racine's, are often Tacitus versified. The dignity of style to be discovered in these *disjecta membra* still impresses us. But, more important than any question of their merits, is the friendly criticism which they occasioned. Few known passages in critical literature furnish more instructive details as to English poetic diction than these unpretending sentences in a letter to West of April 1742:

As to matter of stile, I have this to say: *The language of the age is never the language of poetry* except among the French, whose verse, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself; to which almost every one, that has written, has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives: nay sometimes words of their own composition or invention. Shakespear and Milton have been great creators in this way: and *no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden*, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. Let me give you some instances from Dryden, whom every body reckons a great master of our poetic tongue.—Full of *museful mopeings*—unlike the *trim* of love—a pleasant *beverage*—a *roundelay* of love—stood silent in his *mood*—with knots and *knares* deformed—his *ireful mood*—in proud *array*—his *boon* was granted—and *disarray* and shameful rout—*wayward* but wise—*furbished* for the field—the *foiled doddered oaks*—*disherited*—*smouldering flames*—*retchless*<sup>1</sup> of laws—*crones* old and ugly—the *beldam* at his side—the *grandam-hag*—*villanize* his Father's fame.

Gray goes on to admit that expressions in his play—'*silken son of dalliance*,' '*drowsier pretensions*,' '*wrinkled beldam*,' '*arched the hearer's brow and riveted his eyes in fearful extasie*'—may be faulty; though why they should be thought so, in view of his own theory, must remain a mystery. To take but two examples, he has compounded '*silken son of dalliance*' from that '*New Dunciad*'

<sup>1</sup> *Palamon and Arcite*. The form traces back to *Piers Plowman*.

which he has just been reading, and from Shakespeare's *Henry V*<sup>1</sup>; and he gets his 'arched brow' from Pope<sup>2</sup>. More generally, it is a testimony to the great transformation of literary tastes which Gray ultimately helped to bring about, that words so familiar even in our everyday speech as 'mood,' 'smouldering,' 'beverage,' 'array,' 'boon' and 'wayward' were, in 1742, thought by some to be too fantastic even for poetry. While this correspondence, sometimes little more than a pretty dilettantism and strenuous idleness, was passing between them, Gray was lulled into a false security about his friend West. In April, he writes: 'I trust to the country, and that easy indolence you say you enjoy there, to restore your health and spirits.' On the 8th, he has received a poem on the tardy spring and 'rejoices to see you (West) putting up your prayers to the May: she cannot choose but come at such a call.' Pretty verses enough<sup>3</sup>; but chiefly interesting because they are the last poetic effort of that young and sorrow-stricken spirit to whom Gray sent the *Ode on the Spring*, which he first called 'Noon-tide, an ode,' and has left transcribed in his commonplace-book with the note 'at Stoke, the beginning of June 1742, sent to Fav[-onius, West]: not knowing he was then Dead.' In fact, West died on the first of June. It was strange that the same theme of the opening year should have been respectively the first and the last efforts of the devoted friends, and that the month which silenced one young voice for ever should have wakened the survivor into an unwonted luxuriance of song.

A very brief period of efflorescence in verse preceded Gray's return to Cambridge. From Stoke, to which, after the death of his father in 1741, his mother and his aunt Mary Antrobus had gone to live with their widowed sister Mrs Rogers, he had sent (early in June 1742) the *Ode on the Spring*; he wrote there in August his *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West*, his cento the *Hymn to Adversity*, his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* and a very splenetic *Hymn to Ignorance* (which, happily, remains a fragment), on his projected return to Cambridge. But

<sup>1</sup> 'And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies.'

*Henry V*, II, chor. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'To where the Seine, obsequious as she runs  
Pours at great Bourbon's feet her silken sons.'

*Dunciad* iv.

<sup>3</sup> 'Whom have I hurt? has poet yet, or peer  
Lost the arch'd eyebrow, or Parnassian sneer?'

*Ep. to Arbuthnot*, 1735.

<sup>3</sup> They may be read in the volume *Gray and his Friends* (Cambridge, 1890), in which all West's remains are collected.

we must refer to the same date the most touching of all his tributes to the memory of West, in which the sad thoughts of his English poems on the same theme are combined and concealed in a Latin dress. His ambitious fragment *De Principiis Cogitandi*, begun at Florence in 1740, and dubbed by him 'Tommy Lucretius' is, after all, so far, as it goes, only a *résumé* of Locke; but, in June, so soon as he heard of his loss, he added, apparently without effort, a lament prompted by the keen stimulus of grief, which seems to be more spontaneous than his sonnet or the Eton *Ode*, and is, in fact, the first source of these familiar verses. It will bear comparison with Milton's *Epitaphium Damonis*—Charles Diodati, the friendship between whom and Milton, in many ways, is an exact counterpart to that between West and Gray. Nor can it be denied that Gray's effort is without a certain artificiality, which, *pace* Masson, renders Milton's poem more passionless, and more self-centred and discursive<sup>1</sup>.

From his letters, we see that, for the first two years after his return to Cambridge, now as a fellow-commoner of his college, Gray was idle, so far as he could be for one still *in statu pupillari*. He must have had arrears of lectures and disputations to make up, in order to qualify for the degree of LL.B., an easy task for him, though he writes ironically to Wharton,

by my own indefatigable Application for these ten years past and by the Care and Vigilance of that worthy magistrate The Man-in-Blew<sup>2</sup>, (who I'll assure you has not spared his Labour, nor could have done more for his own Son) I am got half-way to the Top of Jurisprudence.

But he had previously spoken of his allegiance to 'our sovereign Lady and Mistress the President of Presidents, and Head of Heads (if I may be permitted to pronounce her name, that ineffable Octogrammaton) the power of *Laziness*.' Nevertheless, though the poetic impulse of 1742 had spent its force, his interest in current literature is as keen as ever. He criticises Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination* and at once put his finger on that young poet's chief blemish; it is infected, he says, with the jargon of Hutcheson, the disciple of Shaftesbury. It is the fault which he noted later in certain verses of Mason; there was a craze for Shaftesbury among the young men of his time, and beauty and morality were as identical for them as truth and beauty were to Keats at a later date.

<sup>1</sup> For the rest, a close comparison between Milton's Latin poems and Gray's would show how much Gray owed to Milton in this department alone.

<sup>2</sup> The vice-chancellor's servant.

## An Elegy in a Country Churchyard 123

\* In 1745, Gray and Walpole were reconciled. Of this consummation, Gray wrote a satirical account to Wharton, in which his contempt for Ashton was clearly enough expressed. After this strange pronouncement, the irony of fate brought it about that Gray's next poetic effort was his *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat*, which has been discussed with a solemnity worthy of an epic. Walpole had two favourite cats; and has not told Gray which of these was drowned. One of them was a tortoiseshell, the other a tabby.

During the whole of the next four years, Gray seems to have relapsed into his normal state of facile and amusing gossip and criticism. He is 'a chiel taking notes,' but with no intention of printing them: yet we also discover that he is a real power in the society that he pretends to despise, using his influence to get fellowships for his friends, including Mason; interesting himself in the wild and reckless Christopher Smart, then a fellow of Pembroke, and deploring the loss of the veteran Middleton, with whose views he was in sympathy, and whose house was the only one in which he felt at his ease. At the same time, his studies were remarkably various, and his curiosity about foreign, and especially French, literature, intense, as is particularly illustrated by his welcome of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, which forestalled some of the best thoughts in the fragmentary *Alliance of Education and Government* (1748). At length, 12 June 1750, he sends from Stoke to Walpole 'a thing with an end to it'—a merit that most of his writings have wanted—and one whose beginning Walpole has seen long ago<sup>1</sup>. This is the famous *Elegy*, and Walpole appears to have circulated it somewhat freely in manuscript, with the result that the magazines got hold of it; and Gray, to protect himself, makes Walpole send it to Dodsley for immediate printing. Between *The Magazine of Magazines* and Dodsley, the *Elegy*, on its first publication, fared but badly: 'Nurse Dodsley,' Gray says, 'has given it a pinch or two in its cradle that I doubt it will bear the marks of as long as it lives'; and, together, these publishers, licensed and unlicensed, achieved some curious readings. The moping owl complained of those who wandered near her 'sacred bow'r': the young man went 'frowning,' not 'smiling' as in scorn: the rustic's 'harrow' oft the stubborn glebe had broke; and his frail memorial was decked with uncouth rhymes and shapeless 'culture.' And the mangled poet writes, 'I humbly purpose for the benefit of

<sup>1</sup> Probably in 1745 or 1746. See *Gray's Poems* (Cambridge, 1899), p. 130. Mason's statement that the *Elegy* was begun in 1742 is possibly true of the epitaph at the end.

Mr Dodsley and his matrons, that take *awake* for a verb, that they should read *asleep*, and all will be right<sup>1</sup>.

In contrast with this *incuria*, so far as the public is concerned, was the pains which he took, as evidenced by the MS preserved at the lodge at Pembroke college, to set down what he *did* write beyond the possibility of mistake.

The quatrain of ten syllables in which the *Elegy* was written had been used before, but never, perhaps, with conspicuous success, except in Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*. In Gray's hands, it acquired a new beauty, and a music of its own. It does not appear that either the form or the diction of the poem struck the general reader as novel. The prevalent taste was for a sort of gentle melancholy and the mild and tranquil surroundings which minister to the reflective spirit. There is a little truth under the gross exaggeration with which the poet declared that he would have been just as successful if he had written in the prose of Hervey's *Meditations among the tombs*. Certain it is that Young's *Night Thoughts*, completed five years before the *Elegy*, was, for the time being, almost as popular. In Young's work, the sentiment is everything; hence, perhaps, its vogue on the continent, where discriminating judgments on our literature were few and far between.

The *Elegy* seems to us simple in expression, and by no means abstruse, and we have said that there was in it nothing that struck even Gray's contemporaries as revolutionary. Perhaps it was Johnson who first scented the battle from afar. He parodied, in a version of a chorus of *Medea*, the style, as he conceived it, of the *Elegy*, in which adjectives follow their substantives, old words are revived, epithets are doubled and hyphenated, while subject and object are inverted. Contrasted with this was Johnson's own serious rendering of the same passage, in which the language was the current language of the day, with scarcely a word in it that was distinctly poetical<sup>2</sup>. The eccentricities which he noted still remain pitfalls. In the line 'And all the air a solemn stillness holds,' stillness, in spite of commentators, is the nominative, and we almost invariably quote, with so careful a reader as Conington,

Await alike the inevitable hour,

although Gray wrote 'Awaits,' and 'hour' is subject not object. (The thought is that of Horace, 'One night awaits us all'; we should

<sup>1</sup>

'the voice of Nature cries

Awake, and faithful to her wonted fires.'

(As if 'awake' were an imperative.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gray to West, April 1742, quoted *supra*.

be less absorbed in our ambitions if we kept death in mind.) Again, Gray wrote 'The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,' where not only is the plural suggestive of a line of cattle, but some of these are pictured as returning from the pasture and others from the plough. Once more, he wrote

The paths of glory lead but to the grave

meaning that whatever the path chosen, the terminus is the same<sup>1</sup>.

The *Elegy* may be looked upon as the climax of a whole series of poems, dating from 1745, which had evening for their theme. In his 17th year, Thomas Warton, in his *Pleasures of Melancholy*, had all the accessories of the scene which Gray describes; there is a 'sacred silence,' as in a rejected but very beautiful stanza of the *Elegy* there was a 'sacred calm'; there is the 'owl,' and the 'ivy' that 'with mantle green Invests some wasted tower.' But the young poet, in his character of devotee of melancholy, takes us too far, when, with that gruesome enjoyment of horrors which is the prerogative of youth, he leads us at midnight to the 'hollow charnel' to 'watch the flame of taper dim shedding a livid glare.' We are at once conscious of the artificial and ambitious character of the effort, precocious as an essay in literature, but without genuine feeling, without the correspondence between man and nature, which alone can create a mood. And it was the power to create a mood which was the distinctive merit of the best poems of this class and at this date.

Joseph Warton, with the same environment, and, still more, Collins, in his magical *Ode to Evening*<sup>2</sup>, achieved this success. Contrast these with the conventional beings of *The Seasons*, and we become aware that we are nearing an epoch where description is subordinated to the real emotions of humanity, and the country bumpkin no longer chases the rainbow, or 'unfolds,' with Akenside, 'the form of beauty smiling at his heart.'

The *Elegy* in its MS forms brings another noteworthy fact into prominence. These show how pitilessly the poet excised every stanza which did not minister to the congruity of his masterpiece. We feel for instance that Wordsworth, apt to believe that his most trivial fancies were inspirations, would never have parted, for any considerations of structure, with such lines as

<sup>1</sup> The true readings were all recognised and translated by the late H. A. J. Munro, who, in his striking Latin version of the poem, is often its best interpreter.

<sup>2</sup> Friendship and compassion did not reconcile Johnson to the poetry of Collins, who is nearest to Gray in the diction which their critic loathed. See Johnson's *Life of Collins*, *ad fin.*

Hark how the sacred Calm, that broods around  
 Bids ev'ry fierce tumultuous Passion cease,  
 In still small accents whispering from the Ground  
 A grateful Earnest of eternal Peace.

Gray himself seems in one instance to have repented of his infanticide, and writes in the Pembroke MS the marginal note 'insert' over the stanza (evidently adapted but compressed from Collins's *Dirge in Cymbeline*) about the violets scattered on the tomb and the little footsteps of the redbreast which lightly print the ground there. Memory and affection have something to do with the epitaph, which sounds the personal note of which Gray was fond, but is, unquestionably, the weakest part of the poem, and was, perhaps, written about 1742, and inserted in the *Elegy* by afterthought. In general, no poet better understood, or more strictly followed, the Popian maxim 'survey the whole,' that golden rule which a later generation seldom remembers or practices.

The *Elegy* had a curious sequel in *A Long Story*. After her husband's death, in 1749, Lady Cobham must have left the famous Stowe for the mansion house at Stoke Pogis; she had seen the *Elegy* when Walpole was circulating it in MS, and learnt that the author was in her neighbourhood. Accordingly, she caused her niece, Miss Speed, and Lady Schaub, the wife of Sir Luke Schaub, to visit him, at the house of Mrs Rogers, ostensibly to tell him that a Lady Brown, one of his friends, who kept open house in town for travellers young and old, was quite well. Gray was not at home, and this visit of fine ladies may have caused, as Gray pretends, some perturbation to his quiet aunt and mother. A graceful intimacy (nothing more) grew up between the poet and Miss Speed, though gossip declared they were to be married<sup>1</sup>.

*A Long Story*, written with facile pen, goes far to bear out Walpole's statement that Gray never wrote anything easily except things of humour. His serious efforts are always the fruit of long delay and much labour. Next followed (1752) what remains a fragment, only because Mason found a corner of the sole MS copy torn, supplying, *more suo*, words of his own to complete it. It was entitled *Stanzas to Richard Bentley*, who made *Designs for six Poems by Mr T. Gray*. We cannot feel sure that Mason has given us the un mutilated part of the poem correctly. Gray knew Pope and Dryden too well to write

The energy of Pope they might efface  
 And Dryden's harmony submit to mine.

<sup>1</sup> The lady died as comtesse de Viry in 1783.

## A Long Story. The Progress of Poesy 127

It may be suspected that Mason has clumsily transposed these epithets. As evidence how Gray nursed his thoughts we may note that the line

And dazzle with a luxury of light

is a reminiscence of a version which he made in 1737 from Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, bk 14.

One other line in this brief poem lives in the memory—that in which he attributes to Shakespeare and Milton in contrast to 'this benighted age,' a diviner inspiration,

The pomp and prodigality of heaven.

He is, later, in February 1753, in a great fret about the title of the six poems, and, in his desire to seem unaffected, displays a great deal of affectation. It was quite absurd to imagine that the poems, including the *Elegy*, could be regarded as secondary to the designs. It was his foible to pose; but he indulged it with scanty success. In March 1753 died Gray's 'careful tender mother,' as he calls her in the inscription for the vault in which she was laid by the side of her sister Mary Antrobus. In July of the same year, he went to see his friend Wharton, who was living in Durham. Here, the author of the *Elegy* was made much of; but the visit was important in another way. It coincides with a change in Gray's poetic tendencies, and helped to encourage them. He now reverted to that love of the bold and majestic which appears in the alcaics on the Grande Chartreuse. In the neighbourhood of Durham, he found a faint image of those more august scenes.

I have (he writes) one of the most beautiful vales here in England to walk in, with prospects that change every ten steps, and open something new wherever I turn me, *all rude and romantic*; in short the sweetest spot to break your neck or drown yourself in that ever was beheld.

• On 26 December 1754 was completed the ode entitled *The Progress of Poesy*; it had been nearly finished two years before. It was not published until 1759, when Walpole secured it for the Strawberry hill press, together with *The Bard*; the motto *φωναῦτα συνετοῖσι* from Pindar belongs to them both<sup>1</sup>.

Gray did not attach any great value to the rule of strophe and antistrophe, but he strongly objected to the merely irregular stanzas which Cowley introduced. It was probably Congreve who first wrote a real pindaric ode; and, whatever the value of his *Ode to the Queen*, it did something, as Mason points out, to obviate

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently the words that follow in Pindar, *ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐμπνεύου*, were added, when Gray found explanatory notes were needed.

Gray's objection to this form. It was written in short stanzas, and the recurrence of the same metre was more recognisable to the ear than when it was separated by a long interval from its counterpart.

In Gray's time, the muse was always making the grand tour. If the title of Collins's *Ode to Simplicity* were not misleading, we should find in it an embryo *Progress of Poesy*, in which inspiration passes, as with Gray, from Greece to Italy and from Italy to England. The clue to the mystery of the title is found when we discover that, to Collins, 'simplicity' is 'nature,' as Pope understood the word—nature identified with Homer, and with all her great poetic interpreters, who idealise but do not distort her. These pilgrimages of the muse were started by Thomson, who, in his *Liberty*, chose her as his travelling companion, and brought her home intolerably dull, and, not long before Gray's death, by Goldsmith in his *Traveller*.

The most easy way of criticising *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* is to start by criticising their critics, beginning with Francklin, regius professor of Greek at Cambridge, who mistook the 'Aeolian lyre' invoked in the first line of *The Progress* for the instrument invented by Oswald, and objected that 'such an instrument as the Aeolian harp, which is altogether uncertain and irregular must be very ill adapted to the dance which is one-continued regular movement.' Garrick, who spoke from professional knowledge, grasped the truth better, and said that Gray was the only poet who understood dancing. His original in the place which he has in mind is a line of Homer (*Odys.* bk VIII, l. 265); but he borrows without acknowledgment the word 'many-twinkling' from Thomson (*Spring*, l. 158) who uses it of the leaves of the aspen. The poem begins appropriately with an imitation of Horace's description of Pindar,

In profound, unmeasurable song  
The deep-mouth'd Pindar, foaming, pours along.

This beautiful poem is marred by a personal reference at the end, as in the case, to which we have already referred, of the *Elegy*.

Between *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* comes the Fragment of an Ode found in the MS at Pembroke. It is without a title; that which it now bears, *On the pleasure arising from Vicissitude*, is probably due to Mason, who attempted to complete the poem and excelled himself in infelicity, filling up the last stanza as we have it, thus:

To these, if Hebe's self should bring  
The purest cup from Pleasure's spring,  
Say, can they taste the flavour high  
Of sober, simple, genuine Joy?<sup>1</sup>

In *Vicissitude*, some critics have discovered an anticipation of Wordsworth, but we ought to distinguish. When Gray says that 'the meanest flouret of the vale' is 'opening paradise' to the convalescent, he describes the human being under limited and exceptional circumstances. But when Wordsworth, in robust health, derives from the meanest flower, thoughts that 'often lie too deep for tears,' and reproaches his Peter Bell for finding the primrose a yellow primrose and nothing more, he expects from humanity in general more than experience warrants<sup>2</sup>.

Though this fragment probably comes chronologically between *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*, we are not justified in interposing it between them. They are dissociable from it, not only on account of their being printed and published in juxtaposition, as Ode I and Ode II, and of the motto which clearly applies to both, but because together they herald a generic change. *Vicissitude*, with every promise of a beautiful poem, carries on the meditative spirit in which all Gray's serious work had been executed hitherto. But the two odes are conceived in an atmosphere rather intellectual than sentimental. They are a literary experiment. They idealise great facts, historic or legendary, out of which reflection may be generated—but mediately, not directly from the poet's mind. While they have this in common, there remains a point of contrast between them. *The Bard*, more clearly than the other ode, bears traces of those studies from the Norse which Gray had already made and which found expression in *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin*.

• It inaugurates the last stage of the poet's literary history. The design has been marred by many editors through heedlessness in printing. They have not observed that the bard sings his song at first as a solo, until, in the distance, he sees the ghosts of his slain brethren, and invites them to join the chant, while together they weave the winding sheet of Edward's race. That done, they vanish from the bard's sight, and he finishes his prophecy alone. The fault, perhaps inevitable, of the poem, lies in the conclusion, which smells too much of the lamp. The

<sup>1</sup> For another stanza he is indebted to a suggestion in Gray's pocket-book, but has made a poor use of it.

<sup>2</sup> Gray almost directly imitates here Gresset, a favourite poet with him (*Sur ma convalescence*).

salient characteristics of the great poets of the Elizabethan era are described with much skill, though with a certain vagueness proper to prophecy; and yet we cannot help asking, how he can know so much about these his very late successors, while he shows himself rather a discerning critic, than a mighty prophet who has just been foretelling tragic horrors and retribution. They ill suit the majestic form graphically described before his prophecy begins.

A curious evidence of the influence of Gray's *Bard* upon the *suveroi* is to be found in the history of the Ossianic imposture. In Cath-Loda Duan I of this so-called collection of reliques, we have the expression 'Thou kindlest thy hair into meteors,' and in the 'Songs of Selma' Ossian sings:

I behold my departed friends. Their gathering is on Iona, as in the days of other years. Fingall comes like a watery column of mist! his heroes are around: and see the bards of song, grey-haired Ullin; stately Ryno! Alpin with the tuneful voice! *the soft complaint of Minona!* How are ye changed, my friends, etc.

Gray, who had at first welcomed the frauds of Macpherson, because he discerned in them the romantic spirit, became more reticent as time went on, and as his common sense, against which he feebly struggled, gained the mastery. He either did not or would not observe that in them he was imitated or parodied. On the other hand, he repudiated for himself the suggestion that the opening of *The Bard* was modelled upon the prophecy of Nereus in Horace (*Carm.* I. 15). We cannot accept the repudiation, for the resemblance is unmistakable, although it makes but little against the real originality of his poem, and is on the same plane with his acknowledgment that the image of the bard was modelled on the picture by Raphael of the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel, or that of Moses breaking the tables of the law by Parmegiano. *The Bard* still remains the best evidence we possess that Gray, imitative as he is, was, also, an inventive genius.

It might, after all, have come down to us as a colossal fragment, lacking the third antistrophe and epode, but for a stimulus of which Gray gives an account. He heard at Cambridge Parry, the blind Welsh harper, and his sensitive ear was so fascinated that 'Odikle' was put in motion again. So completely did he associate his verse with music, that he gave elaborate directions for its setting, and it is a very high compliment to Gray's taste that Villiers Stanford, though he knew nothing of these instructions, carried them out to the letter.

Before this, in 1756, occurred an event which Gray describes

only vaguely 'as a sort of aera in a life so barren of events as' his. The affair has been treated with so much difference of opinion that we can only summarise the conclusion at which we have arrived. Gray had been much tormented by some young men, of whom two were certainly fellow-commoners residing on his staircase, and he had a nervous dread of fire, upon which they probably played. He accordingly got Wharton to bespeak him a rope-ladder, a strong temptation to the young men to make him put it to the proof. It is possible that, before the outrage, they had begun kindling fires of shavings on his staircase. At last, an early hunting party caused the huntmen to shout 'fire' under his window, some of them, perhaps, before joining the party, having made the usual blaze on the stairs. The poet put his night-capped head out of the window and, discovering the hoax, drew it in again. This was all that was known to Sharp, fellow of Corpus, who wrote only six days after Gray's migration to Pembroke. The exaggerated form in which the story is still current was shaped in 1767 by a certain Archibald Campbell, a scribbler in a production called *The Sale of Authors*, who expressly confesses that he vouches for no details in what he describes as a harmless pleasantry. Suffice it to say that the master, Dr Law, to whom Gray complained, made light of this 'boyish frolic,' as he called it, and Gray, in consequence, changed his college.

The year 1759 was mainly spent in London, near the British museum, which was opened to the public in January. Gray revelled in MS treasures there, and made copious extracts from them; the most interesting, perhaps, to the general reader are letters from Richard III, and the defence of Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet; both of which transcripts he made for Walpole, who used them in his *Miscellaneous Antiquities* and *Historic Doubts*. At this time, also, he probably composed the treatise called *Metrum*, and *Observations on the poems of Lydgate*, probably in view of a design for the history of English poetry which was never executed.

In 1762, Gray made a tour in Yorkshire and Derby, and saw Kirkstall abbey, the Peak, of which he thought but little, and Chatsworth. On his return to Cambridge, he found the professorship of modern history vacant, and caused his claim to be represented to Lord Bute. But the professorship was given to Lawrence Brockett, who had been tutor to Sir James Lowther, son-in-law of the favourite Bute. In 1764, possibly with Wharton as his companion, he made his first visit to Scotland, and, in 1765, he repeated this visit as the guest of Lord Strathmore, formerly

a fellow-commoner of Pembroke. On this second visit, he met Robertson and other *literati*. It is a proof of the remarkable catholicity of Gray's love of scenery that, in the earlier of these years, possessed though he was with the sublime grandeur of the mountains, he could also enjoy and describe graphically the charms of a gentler landscape, in a part of England (Winchester, Southampton, Netley abbey, etc.) dear to Collins.

In the following year, he once more visited Scotland and became acquainted with Beattie, author of *The Minstrel*, to the last an unfinished poem, the earliest part of which he helped to correct. His criticism is just but with two notable exceptions. He truly remarks that too much is given to descriptions and reflections; Beattie does not know what to do with his minstrel when he has made him. Yet Gray's remarks are in two particulars disappointing. In direct contrast to his doctrine as stated to West in April 1742, he says 'I think we should wholly adopt the language of Spenser's time or wholly renounce it. You say, you have done the latter; but, in effect, you retain *fared, forth, mead, wight, ween, gaude, shene, in sooth, aye, eschew*, etc.' And he objects to Beattie's use of alliteration: if he had confined himself to censuring one line in the part of the poem which was sent him

The long-robed minstrels wake the warbling lyre

it would have been well. As it is, Beattie had an easy retort upon him with

Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind

in the *Elegy*.

In 1768, Gray's poems were republished by Dodsley, and for *A Long Story* were substituted the two Norse odes, *The Fatal Sisters*, and *The Descent of Odin*. A similar edition came, at the same time, from the press of Foulis (the Glasgow Elzevir). When Gray wrote *The Bard*, he had already made some study of Scandinavian poetry. He had *The Fatal Sisters* in mind when he wrote

Weave the warp and weave the woof  
The Winding sheet of Edward's race.

Perhaps, *The Descent of Odin*, in one passage of which<sup>1</sup> it is

1      'Right against the eastern gate  
By the moss-grown pile he sate  
Where long of yore to sleep was laid  
The dust of the prophetic Maid,  
Facing to the northern clime  
Thrice he traced the runic rhyme;  
Thrice pronounc'd, in accents dread,  
The thrilling verse that wakes the dead.'

Impossible not to recognise an anticipation of Scott, is, in this respect, still more suggestive.

In 1768, Brockett, Cambridge professor of modern history, met with a fatal accident on returning from Hinchbrook. Stonehewer, who had been one of Gray's closest friends at Peterhouse and who acted as the duke of Grafton's secretary, pleaded Gray's claims to the professorship of history, and with success. The office was a sinecure; he had some intention of delivering lectures, but the form of his projected inaugural lecture is in Latin, and whatever his design was it fell through. In his new capacity, it was his task to write the installation ode when Grafton was made chancellor of the University. The work proved the one exception to the fact that he never wrote well unless spontaneously. He lingered long before he began. At last, he startled Nicholls by throwing open his door to his visitor and shouting 'Hence, avaunt! 'tis holy ground,' and the new ode was completed. A sort of heraldic splendour characterises this, his last great effort; in places, it seems to step out of a page of Froissart, and, notwithstanding the bile of Junius, the pomp and circumstance of the closing personal panegyric do not convey any impression of inappropriateness.

This business over, Gray went with Wharton towards the English Lakes, but his companion fell ill at Brough, and Gray pursued his journey alone. The fruit of it was a journal which he sent from time to time to Wharton, and of which, with a Porsonian delight in his own beautiful handwriting, there is reason to believe that he made more than one copy. The journal was never published until after his death, and the public did not know till then how exactly he had surveyed the scenery. Wordsworth, if he knew, ignored the fact that a poet whom he habitually depreciated was, as a minute admirer of the views of nature, not less enthusiastic than his censor. The credit of discovering the Lakes belongs really to neither of these. It belongs to poor crazy Brown, the author of *The Estimate*, who wrote of a night scene near Keswick:

Nor voice, nor sound broke on the deep serene;  
But the soft murmur of soft-gushing rills  
(Unheard till now, and now scarce heard), etc.

The whole of Gray's journal is precious, abounding in description, facts of natural history, historical detail, antique records, experiences gained with a persistent effort, very creditable to one

generally very nervous and timid, but careless of fatigue and risk in his fascinating quest<sup>1</sup>.

At the beginning of 1770, Gray, through Nicholls, found a strange young friend, to beguile for a short time his solitary days, and give his waning life a sort of Martin's summer. Young Charles-Victor de Bonstetten came to him to fascinate, but, also, to perplex, him. The undergraduates puzzled the foreigner; he could not understand the young seigneurs travestied as monks in the university glorified by Newton. He knew so little of the real life of these neophytes as never to suspect that their conduct and character were far from ascetic. It was a secret Gray prudently withheld from him, jealously keeping his disciple for himself. Bonstetten spent most of his time in Gray's room, having, however, a young sizar to wake him in the morning and read Milton to him. He studied from morning to night and spent his evenings with Gray. His own experience was, in truth, already much wider than that of his now ageing friend. He had seen Rousseau, he had talked with Voltaire; he had even tried suicide, anticipating Werther under the spell of that *Weltschmerz* which the Briton imperfectly understood. All this, Gray never knew, or thought it best not to notice. He wrote to the young man, who relapsed for a time into melancholy on his return to Switzerland, as Fénelon's Mentor might talk to Telemachus; and epitomises for his benefit the sixth book of Plato's *Republic*. In the end, Bonstetten became an excellent magistrate, and served Switzerland well, until the revolution drove him into exile. He never forgot Gray, the old poet whose last days he had brightened, and who had parted from him with pathetic regret<sup>2</sup>.

The scene had begun to close in when, in the company of Nicholls, he went through five of the western counties, descended the Wye forty miles in a boat, saw Tintern and, at Malvern, on receiving a copy of *The Deserted Village*, exclaimed emphatically 'this man is a poet.' But there was not, for the first part of 1771, much sign of any serious ailment; apart from some indications of failing vitality in his frame, his mind was as active as ever, till, in June, he became conscious of a new complaint, and, on 24 July, was taken suddenly ill in hall. On the 30th, he was dead.

A survey of Gray's work would include MSS of incredibly larger volume than the few poems published in his lifetime. Yet

<sup>1</sup> He travelled, of course, much on foot, but it is not probable that he always did so. It was not his way to record on all occasions how he travelled. The distances which he walked have been absurdly exaggerated.

<sup>2</sup> See the story told more at length in the second volume of *Gray's Letters* (1904).

no small part of his reputation rests, for us, upon copious MSS, carefully preserved by him, but never intended to be seen, except by an esoteric circle. To begin with, his invaluable letters are an index to his whole character, and to the humorous spirit that is often, as in the case of Hood, twin sister to melancholy. In his letters, his life lies spread out before us; they are the only absolutely trustworthy records for his biographers. Their interest lies in their infinite variety. Walpole was a better historian of social life; but his claims to erudition were slight, his obligations to Gray, acknowledged and unacknowledged, were great<sup>1</sup>, and his scientific knowledge was *nil*; while, whatever the interest of his letters for political and social history, they contain nothing comparable to the depth and pathos of Gray's more limited memories and friendships<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, Gray's letters are an excellent guide as a survey of continental literature; the best French writers he literally devoured; his liking for inferior fiction he shared with the fashionable world, partly because it *was* fashionable, but such writers as Montesquieu, Buffon and the encyclopædists he read with enthusiasm. With Rousseau, except his *Émile*, and with Voltaire, he is utterly out of sympathy. He plunges deep into the pages of Froissart, 'the Herodotus of a barbarous age,' of Sully's *Mémoires*, of Madame de Maintenon's letters, and the memoirs of that French Fanny Burney, Madame de Staal Delaunay. He knows, beside Froissart, all the old French chroniclers, and gives advice as to the order and method of their study. While, at times, like a market-gardener, he exchanges with Wharton notes as to the dates of the returns of the seasons and the state of the crops, he is also a man of science. He is in touch with Linnaeus, through his disciple at Upsala, and with the English naturalist Stillingfleet. Classical literature has, for him, no dry bones. He rises to enthusiasm on such subjects and expects Wharton to share his delight in the description of the retreat from Syracuse, which his friend has just reached in the seventh book of *Thucydides*.

In December 1757, he was offered the laureateship, but contemptuously declined it; the offer, nevertheless, was a tribute to him, as the first poet of his generation. And, indeed, in 1748, before he had written very much, he sat in scornful judgment upon his contemporaries. In Dodsley's collection of that year, the only living poets whom he can praise unreservedly are Shenstone

<sup>1</sup> See his *Anecdotes of Painting* and Gray's comments; also, Gray's criticisms on *Historic Doubts* (read between the lines).

<sup>2</sup> As to Walpole's letters, see chap. xi, *post*.

for *The Schoolmistress*, Johnson for *London* and *Verses* on the opening of Garrick's theatre, Dyer for *Grongar Hill*, and, of course, Walpole. But, he adds

What shall I say to Mr Lowth, Mr Bidley, Mr Rolfe, the Rev. Mr Brown ('Estimate Brown'), Seward, etc. etc. If I say Messieurs! this is not the thing; write prose, write sermons, write nothing at all: they will disdain me and my advice.

Of Gray's most persistent friend and correspondent, Mason, it is difficult to speak with justice or moderation. Gray has described him with kindliness and sincerity, and it is, perhaps, the one redeeming trait in Mason's edition of the correspondence that he has preserved this description with almost Boswellian self-sacrifice. According to Gray, he is a creature of childlike simplicity, but writes too much, and hopes to make money by it, reads very little, and is insatiable in the matter of preferment; the simplicity we may question, and it seems incompatible with the rest of the description. He garbled Gray's letters ruthlessly; in their un mutilated form, they would have disposed for ever of his claims to be his friend's *compère*. He may be excused for not wishing to figure before the public as 'dear Skroddler'; but, when he pleads the boyish levity of some of the letters as an excuse for his expurgations, he knows better, and is simply posing, often substituting his own bombast for Gray's plain speaking. Gray recognised merit in Mason's *Musaeus*, a *Monody on the death of Pope*, spite of shells and coral floors; he liked, moderately, *Elfrida* and, immoderately, *Caractacus*, from which, in *The Bard*, he quotes an example of the sublime. His elegies and other verses it would be profitless to enumerate. They have no place in the history of our literature. He wrote political pasquinades of no great merit; but it may be reckoned to his credit that he was a consistent Whig, so that, on the accession of George III, he lost all chance of further preferment. He showed very little magnanimity in attacking, in his *Isis*, the university of Oxford, then (1746 sq.) out of favour with the court, the bulk of whose patronage went to Cambridge. He was answered in *The Triumph of Isis* by Thomas Warton, then a youth of twenty-one, with spirit and good temper; yet, such was his vanity that he believed he had inflicted a mortal wound, and, years after, congratulated himself on entering Oxford at night, without fear of a crowd of 'booing undergraduates.' His superficial resemblance to the manner of Gray did the greater poet some harm. Their contemporaries, and certain critics of a later

generation, did not see any difference between Mason's frosty glare and constant falsetto and the balanced eloquence of Gray.

If the project of a joint work with Mason on the history of English poetry had not fallen through, Gray must have found his associate a terrible incubus. No greater contrast existed at that date than Mason's slipshod, as compared with Gray's scholarly accuracy. Even the work of Warton was an inadequate substitute for that which Gray might have given us; the probability is that its only fault would have been too much, even as Warton has too little, method.

There was one of Gray's preferences that contributed greatly to the appreciation which, as the historian of our poetry, he would have shown of its earlier stages. In strong contrast to the elaborate and stately diction of his own verse, he loved best the poets who were almost models of simplicity: Matthew Green, and the French Gresset, and Dyer of *Grongar Hill*, and whatever Shenstone and even Tickell had written in the same vein. His mind was early ripe for the ballads of Percy's *Reliques*. He finds, accordingly, in *Gil Morrice*, all the rules of Aristotle observed by some unknown ballad-writer who had never read Aristotle. He derives from Macpherson's fragments and his Fingall evidence that 'without any respect of climates poetry reigns in all nascent societies of men.' The theory itself is intrinsically better than the support on which he chose to rest it. He was struggling in that portentous Ossianic mist which spread from Britain to the continent, a mist through which people of genius, the greatest as well as the least, wandered for a time, bewildered by their own shadows. The last efforts of his muse, dating from *The Bard*, are, in the history of our literature, incomparably the most important. From his Latin verse, which, if we except his jocular or satiric efforts, was alone fluent and spontaneous, and is still significant as marking the first stage in his poetic development, we pass to a meditative mood sufficiently conventional in form except in its extreme classicism, and transcendent only because impressed by genuine feeling, and thence to the scanty product by virtue of which we regard him as a pioneer, who seems, like Hesperus, to lead a starry host, but really moves with the rest in obedience to the same mysterious impulse. His fame, in this character, has obscured without effort that of many lesser bards whose course was in the same direction, until the magic was transmitted to Coleridge, and then to Scott, who used it with more persistent energy and more conspicuous effect.

## CHAPTER VII

### YOUNG, COLLINS AND LESSER POETS OF THE AGE OF JOHNSON

THE posthumous experience, if it may be so described, of most of the poets to be treated in the present chapter, like that of their predecessors, noticed in an earlier section of this *History*<sup>1</sup>, illustrates certain doctrines, both of the less, and of the more, vulgar philosophy of life. For more than a century and a half, through the successive collections of Dodsley, Pearch, Johnson, Anderson and Chalmers, they have had opportunities of being generally known which can hardly be said to have been shared by the verse writers of any other period of English literary history. But, for the last century at any rate, this familiarity with their productions has, also, brought about its proverbial consequence. Collins, indeed, if not *nemine contradicente*, yet, by a strong body of the best critical judgment, has (putting range of kind and bulk of production out of the question) been allowed poetical quality of almost the rarest and purest sort. Young, despite the great volume of now imperfectly interesting matter comprehended in his poetical works, and the extreme inequality of his treatment of it, despite, too, the defects of his temper and other drawbacks, enjoyed, for a long time, great and almost European popularity; he possesses, for the literary historian, the attraction of having actually anticipated Pope in one of the most characteristic directions of Pope's satiric energy; and he can never be explored by any patient and unbiassed investigator without the recognition of flame under the ashes, flowers in the wilderness and fragments of no contemptible moulding among the ruins. Shenstone, Dyer, Green ('Spleen'-Green), Blair, Armstrong, Akenside, Beattie, Smart—there are associations with each of these names which ought not to be forgotten; and, even from the *numerus* which may be grouped with them, there remains something to be gathered as to the general state and

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, vol. ix, chap. vi, sec. ii.

fortunes of literature and of poetry which ought not to be missing in such a work as the present.

An extensive notice of biographical data, not generally included in the plan of this *History*, would be altogether out of place in a collective chapter; but some references of the kind will be found to be occasionally indispensable. Young's long life, from the time when he entered Winchester in 1695, was exactly divided between residence at school and in three colleges at Oxford (New college, where he missed securing a place on the foundation, Corpus Christi, and, lastly, All Souls, of which he became a lay fellow in 1708) and tenure of the college living of Welwyn, to which, having given up plans of professional and parliamentary life and taken orders, he was presented in 1730. Throughout each of these long periods, he appears (except at the moment of his election at All Souls) as a disappointed man, baffled as to regular promotion at school; wandering from college to college; not, indeed, ever in apparent danger of the jail, but incessantly and fruitlessly courting the patron; an unsuccessful, or but once successful, dramatist; a beaten candidate for parliament; and, in his second stage, perpetually desiderating, but never, in the very slightest measure, receiving, that ecclesiastical promotion which, in some not quite comprehensible way, almost every eighteenth century divine seems to have thought his plain and incontestable right. In both parts of his career, moreover, there can be little doubt that Young suffered from that curious recoil or rebuff for which, perhaps, not enough allowance has been made in meting out praise or blame among the successive literary generations of the eighteenth century. Addison's administrative, and Prior's diplomatic, honours were not unmixed blessings to their possessors; but there cannot be any doubt that they made Grub street, or even places much more agreeable and less 'fabulous' than Grub street, all the more intolerable to the younger generation.

Before applying the light of this (of course not novel) consideration to Young's work, let us see what that work (most of it now utterly forgotten) actually was. He began with addresses and odes of various kinds (one on the queen's death) in the last two years of Anne, and produced the play *Busiris*, a paraphrase of *Job* and his *Letters to Tickell*, in 1719. In 1721 appeared his one famous play *The Revenge*,\* and, a little later, in parts (1725-8), the most important work of his younger, but not very young, years, *The Universal Passion*. During the years

1728 to 1730 were published the amazing pieces called *Ocean* and *Imperium Pelagi*, with others. *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality*, began to appear in 1744, when the author was nearly sixty-two. A third play, *The Brothers*, followed in 1753: and his last work of importance, *Resignation*, in 1762.

The immense and long enduring popularity of *Night Thoughts* hardly requires much comment, even now that it has utterly vanished and is never likely to return. This popularity was not, as it has been in some other cases, due to lack of insight on the part of the public that bestowed it; but, as perhaps nearly always happens, it was due to the fact that the merits of the work, in part, at least, were exactly such as that public could best appreciate, and the faults such as it was most disposed to pass over. *Night Thoughts* is hard reading, nowadays, even for the most catholic lover of poetry; and the rest of Young, even *The Universal Passion*, is harder. But he must be a very exceptional critic who can do Young justice, either without a complete reading of his poems, or at a first reading only. Two keys, perhaps, are wanted to unlock the cabinet. The first is an easy and wellknown key—the effect of personal disappointment. To this feeling, in various forms, poets are proverbially liable; but it is difficult to remember any poet who shows it so constantly and in such various forms as Young. It is not always very noisy in him: but it shows itself everywhere—in his satire as well as in his preachings and moralisings, in the innumerable passages, whether longer or shorter, of a form of flattery which sometimes carries with it a despairing sense that nothing, or nothing adequate, will, after all, come from the flattered; in the elegies over apparent triumphs such as Addison's, and apparent failures like that of Swift's 'little Harrison,' who was Young's intimate friend; last of all, but not least of all, and, perhaps, most pathetically, in the title and the substance alike of his swan-song *Resignation*. That his disappointment, on the whole, was rather unreasonable is a feeble, as well as a 'philistine,' way of dismissing the matter: unreasonable disappointments are apt to be the most, not the least, keenly felt.

But there was something else wrong with Young. Johnson, in one of that great majority of his judgments on which one cannot do better than fall back, pronounced that 'with all his defects he was a man of genius and a poet.' He was this; but, of almost all men of genius and almost all poets, he was the most singularly lacking in art; and he seems, to some extent, to have been aware

of it, if we may judge from the frequency with which he dismissed his own work as not worth republication. It is quite astonishing how bad an artist Young is; for, whatever its deficiencies in other respects and whatever its limits in the domain of art, the eighteenth century did not usually, according to its lights, make default in questions concerning art. In gross and in detail, Young's art, even his mere craftsmanship, is absolutely untrustworthy. His rimes are the worst that we have from any English poet, except Mrs Browning. He constantly ventures, in narrative blank verse, upon the dramatic redundant syllable, which is always a blemish, and sometimes fatal, out of drama. The almost incredible absurdities of *Ocean*, *Imperium Pelagi* and other odes come partly from want of taste in selection of stanza, partly from infelicities of phrase which few schoolboys would commit.

In the greater matter (as some hold it) of construction, he is equally weak. He really did precede Pope in certain turns, as well as in a general atmosphere, of satire, which, it may be suspected, is the reason why some not illiterate persons are in the habit of attributing lines and passages in Young to his greater successor. But, in the earlier poet, the inequality, the awkwardness, the verbiage, are still constantly present.

It ought to be set down to the credit of public taste, which seldom receives, and does not often deserve, praise, that these defects (except the verbiage) are somewhat less perceptible in what was long held to be a masterpiece, and is Young's masterpiece still. Even the annoying and defacing redundant syllable may be excused, to some extent, on the plea that *The Complaint*, to all intents and purposes, is an enormous soliloquy—a lamentation in argumentative and reflective monologue, addressed by an actor of superhuman lung-power to an audience of still more superhuman endurance. It has, throughout, the character of the *epideictic*—the rhetorical exercise deliberately calculated and consciously accepted as a matter of display—which is frequent in more serious eighteenth century verse. What Shakespeare, in a few lines of *Hamlet* and of *Macbeth*, compressed and sublimed into immortal poetry, Young watered down or hammered out into rhetoric, with endless comments and 'uses' and applications. But, in passages which are still unforgotten, he allows himself a little concentration and something that is strangely like, if it is not actually, sincerity; and, then, he does become, in his day and in his place, 'a man of genius and a poet.' Indeed, if he were judged by single lines, both of the satiric and of the reflective kind, these titles could still less be

refused him. And it is only fair to say that such lines and passages occur not merely in *Night Thoughts*, not merely in *The Universal Passion*, but almost everywhere (except in the odes, from the early *Last Day* and *Job* to the final *Resignation*).

As we turn to William Collins, we come, perhaps, to the only name the inclusion of which in this chapter may raise a cavil. 'If Collins is to be classed with lesser poets,' it may be said, 'then who, in Collins's time, or in his century, is a greater?' There is no space here for detailed controversy on such points; yet, without some answer to the question, the literary history of the age would be obscured or left imperfect. In the opinion of the present writer, Collins, in part, and the chief part, of his work, was, undoubtedly, a 'greater poet,' and that not merely of his own time. There is no time—Elizabethan, Georgian or Victorian—at which the best things in the *Odes* would not have entitled their author to the verdict 'poetry *sans phrase*.' But there is another part of his work, small as it may be in bulk—the whole of it is but small, and, in the unhappy circumstances of his life, could hardly have been larger—which is not greater poetry, which, indeed, is very distinctly lesser; and this 'minority' occurs also, we must almost say constantly, in the *Odes* themselves. Further, this minority or inferiority is of a peculiar kind, hardly exemplified elsewhere. Many poets are unequal: it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that, in varying measure, every poet is unequal. The string, be it of bow or of lyre, cannot always be at full tension. Some—we have but just quoted an example in Young—are unequal with an inequality which cannot take any benefit from the old metaphor. But, at certain times, hardly any poet, and few poets at any time, exhibit the peculiar inequality which Collins displays; and, for historical and critical purposes, the analysis of the special character of this difference is, perhaps, of almost as much importance as that of the discovery and recognition of his poetic idiosyncrasy and merit when he is at his best; perhaps, it is of even greater importance than this.

For, here, the cross-valuation of man and time, easily abused down to mere glib futility, yet very significant when used rightly, becomes of the very first moment; in fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that there is hardly another case where it counts for so much, and where it explains so much. Almost everything that is good in Collins belongs to the man; almost everything that is not good belongs to the time. And, consequently, there is, again, hardly a poet of whom it may be said, with less of this

utility, that even supposing his unhappy mental affliction to have remained the same (which, in the different circumstances, ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> may conceivably might not), his production, as a contemporary of Shakespeare or of Milton, of Coleridge or of Tennyson, would have been entirely different in all the features that are not its best. The Collins of the *Odes*, at his best, is the poet of all time in general and no time in particular; the Collins of the *Eclogues* is everywhere the poetaster of the eighteenth century. Nor is the distinction to be confined to this easy and sweeping separation; for, in the *Odes* themselves, it constantly, and, to the critical reader, not at all tiresomely, presents and represents itself. In two succeeding poems of the collection, in two stanzas of the same poem, in two successive lines, nay, in the very same line of the same stanza, two writers—the Collins of eternity and the Collins of his day—are continually manifesting themselves. The latter talks about a 'British shell' when he means 'English poetry'; intrudes the otiose and, in fact, ludicrous, detail of 'its southern site,' a sort of auctioneer's item, in his description of the temple of Pity; indulges in constant abuse of such words as 'scene.' And he sometimes intrudes upon, though he cannot quite spoil, the loftiest inspiration of the Collins who writes 'How sleep the brave' and the *Ode to Evening*.

When this is thoroughly understood, it not merely brings the usual reward—the fact of this understanding—but a distinct increase of enjoyment. On the full perception of the difference between the two Collinses, there follows, not merely pardon, as in the proverb, but a possibility of neglecting what would otherwise annoy. The 'British shell' no longer suggests artillery or oysters; the 'turtles' have no savour of the tureen; and nothing interferes with our appreciation of the dewy eyes of Pity and the golden hair of Peace, when the sense of incongruity is, as Coleridge says of the sense of disbelief, 'suspended.'

In regard, indeed, to the *Eclogues*, the critical is almost the only satisfaction. They occupy but little room—less than a score of pages, containing scarcely more than three hundred lines, form not a very severe tax upon the reader. But, in them, we certainly find the Collins of the hour almost unrelieved by a single exhibition of individual poetic quality. Eastern apologues in prose or verse had been patented for the whole eighteenth century by the authority of Addison; and Collins was merely following one of the various fashions beyond which it was reckoned improper, if not positively unlawful, to stray. The consecrated couplet

furnishes the metre; the *gradus* epithet—‘radiant morn,’ ‘wanton gales,’ ‘tender passion’—lends its accustomed aid to swell and balance the line; and, though we sometimes come on a verse<sup>2</sup> that shows forth the poet, such as

Cold is her breast like flowers that drink the dew,

unreasonable expectations of more instances of the same sort are promptly checked by such flatnesses as the statement that ‘the virtues *came along*,’ or such otiosities as

In *distant* view along the *level* green.

Had these attempts to compose something that might represent the poetry of Saadi and Hafiz and Omar Khayyam stood alone, Collins might certainly have justified the strictures<sup>1</sup> of *The Gentleman's Magazine* on his fellow-contributor to *Dodsley*. Fortunately, they do not stand alone, but are accompanied and effaced by the *Odes*. Besides the two pieces to which reference has already been made—the *Ode to Evening*, with its almost, if not quite, successful extension of the ‘blank’ principle to lyric, and the exquisite softness and restraint of ‘How sleep the brave’—at least three others, in different degrees, have secured general admiration. These are the slightly ‘time-marked,’ but, surely, charming for all time, *Dirge in Cymbeline*, the splendid outburst of the *Liberty* ode and the posthumous *Superstitions of the Highlands*, of which the text may, perhaps, admit of dispute, but certainly not the spirit and the poetic quality. Hardly one of these, unless it be ‘How sleep the brave,’ is, as a whole poem, faultless; but Longinus would have made no mistake about the ‘slips’ and ‘faults’ of Collins, as compared with his sublimity—and why should we?

The other poets to be mentioned in the present chapter are inferior to these two; but, with rare exception, each has something that would make it improper to batch or group him with others, as was done on a former occasion; while hardly one is so distinctly eminent that, in his case, chronological order need be disregarded as it has been in that of Collins. We shall, therefore, observe it, with the very slight further liberty (possibly no liberty at all) of mentioning John Dyer, who was certainly not born within the eighteenth century, but whose exact birth-year is unknown, before Green and Blair, who can be positively claimed for the seventeenth.

For Dyer, though his real claims rest upon one short piece only, and that not belonging to the very highest style of poetry,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ante*, vol. ix, chap. vi, sec. ii, p. 191.

must be recognised as a poet, and as a very remarkable poet, from curiously different points of view. *The Fleece* and *The Ruins of Rome* are merely examples of the extraordinary mistakes as to subjects proper for poetry, and the ordinary infelicity in dealing with them, which have condemned eighteenth century verse as a whole to a lower place than it deserves. *The COUNTRY Walk*, not disagreeable in itself, is either a vastly inferior first draft, or a still more surprisingly unsuccessful replica, of *Grongar Hill*. But *Grongar Hill* itself is one of those poems which occupy a place of their own, humble though it may be, as compared with the great epics and tragedies, simple and of little variety, as compared with the garlands or paradises of the essentially lyrical poets, but secure, distinguished and, practically, unique. That even Johnson, though he thought it 'not very accurately written,' allowed it to be 'pleasing,' and felt sure that 'when once read it would be read again,' is a striking testimony in its favour. For it deals almost wholly with 'prospects,' to which Johnson was contemptuously indifferent; and its 'inaccuracy' (which, in truth, is the highest accuracy) was to prove a very crowbar for loosening the foundations of the prosody that he thought accurate.

The poem is really a little wonder in subject and form alike. The devotees of 'the subject' cannot fail, if they know the facts, to recognise in it the first definite return to that fixing of the eye on the object in nature which, though not so absent from Dryden as Wordsworth thought, had been growing rarer and rarer (save in such obscure work as Lady Winchilsea's) for generation after generation, and which was to be the most powerful process in the revived poetry of the future. The student of form cannot fail to perceive in that inaccuracy which Johnson (for him) gently blamed something neither more nor less than a return to the peculiar form of the octosyllabic couplet which, after being developed by Shakespeare and Fletcher and the pastoral poets of the early seventeenth century, had been exquisitely employed by Milton in the twin masterpieces of his youth. The poem appeared, in 1726, in the *Miscellany* of that remarkable person Lewis<sup>1</sup>. Even the first of *The Seasons* had but just been published; and, if there is a certain identity of spirit between this poem and Dyer's, the expression is wholly different. Even those who are free from any half-partisan, half-ignorant contempt for the age of Pope and the age of Johnson, must own how strange and sweet, amid the ordinary concert of those ages, is the sound of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ante*, vol. ix, p. 188.

Who in the purple evening lie  
On the mountain's lonely van...

or

A little rule, a little sway,  
A sunbeam on a winter's day...

or

Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,  
Wave succeeding wave, they go  
A various journey to the deep,  
Like human life, to endless sleep.

That Dyer was a painter as well as a poet goes, no doubt, for something; that, at least, he liked to think he had married a collateral descendant of, in his own phrase, 'everybody's Shakespeare,' may go for a great deal.

In Dyer—or, at least, in *Grongar Hill*—we see some of the first, and almost best, fruits of the romantic spirit and style. In Matthew Green, both style and spirit are of the other kind, but hardly less agreeable in their own way. He, also, so far as good verse goes, is a 'single-speech' poet; but he derives some advantage from the fact that he hardly tried to speak on any other occasion, though a few minor pieces usually accompany *The Spleen*, and a few more might, it seems, be added to them. Green was a quaker-freethinker (a curious evolution) and a clerk in the custom-house, where he amiably prevented a reform which would have disestablished, or, at least, dismilked, the cats. He seems, on the whole, to have been more like a French man of letters of the time than like an Englishman possessing a temperament which may, at once, have qualified and disqualified him for treating 'the English disease.' It must be admitted that his treatment is somewhat superficial, and more than a little desultory; but it certainly exhibits a condition completely opposite to that of the ailment, and even, for the time of reading, provides an antidote. The octosyllables, 'accurate,' as Johnson would say, without stiffness or limpness, and slipping lightly along without any Hudibrastic acrobaticism, frame a succession of thoughts that, if never very profound, are always expressed with a liveliness of which the well-known

Fling but a stone, the giant dies

is by no means too favourable a specimen. Sometimes, we have satiric glances at individuals, as that, near the beginning, at Gildon; sometimes, lively 'thumbnails' of contemporary manners; once or twice, more elaborate drawings, as of the often quoted

Farm some twenty miles from town.

The epicurean attitude of the lighter, but not the coarser, kind has seldom been better illustrated in verse.

Chronology could hardly have been more complacent in contrast-planning than by putting the author of *The Grave* next in order. Here, also, we have a poet of one poem; but the subject of that poem has at once greater possibilities and greater dangers. A poet who writes unpoetically on death at once proves himself to be no poet; and Blair has not failed to pass the test. But he has passed it with the qualification of his time; and, perhaps, so universal a subject ought to receive rather more universality of treatment. Even the fine *coda* (which did not form part of the original edition of the poem) dates itself a little too definitely; and the suicide passage, to name no other, is somewhat rhetorical, if not even melodramatic. But there is no doubt that it had a powerful influence. The very fact that contemporary critics thought the language lacking in 'dignity' offers the best testimony to its freedom, at least sometimes, from the always irksome, and sometimes intolerable, buckram which mars Young and Thomson, Armstrong and Akenside, and which is by no means absent from Collins or from Gray. The blank verse, like nearly all dating from this period, though not so badly as some of it, abuses the abrupt full-stopped middle pause, and is too much given to dramatic redundancy. But it has a certain almost rugged massiveness, and occasionally flings itself down with real *momentum*. The line

The great negotiators of the earth

possesses sarcastic force of meaning as well as prosodic force of structure. It would be hard to find two poets of more different schools than Blair and Blake. Yet it was not a mere association of contradictories when Blake illustrated Blair<sup>1</sup>.

The peculiar 'tumid and gorgeous' style of the eighteenth century in blank verse, in which Johnson<sup>2</sup> professed to find the only excuse—and that inadequate—for the metre he detested, not unfrequently gives the wary critic a certain pause before he absolutely excludes the notion of conscious or half-conscious burlesque on the part of its practitioners. There had been no doubt about this burlesque in the case of *The Splendid Shilling*<sup>3</sup>, which,

<sup>1</sup> The close coincidence of *The Grave*, which was certainly written by 1742, though not published till the following year, and *Night Thoughts*, the first part of which appeared in the earlier year, has given occasion to the usual idle disputes about priority. The conception of each of these poems was, probably, quite independent.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, vol. ix, chap. x, p. 256.

undoubtedly, had led not a few of them to Milton. Even in Thomson, a later and much stronger influence—in fact, one which directly mastered most blank-verse writers after 1726—it is not certain whether the temper which avowedly exists in *The Castle of Indolence* may not sometimes lie concealed in *The Seasons*. And John Armstrong, Thomson's intimate friend and more than countryman—for their birthplaces, just inside the Border, were within a few miles of each other—one of the garrison invalids of the castle itself, was, by common consent of tradition, a remarkable specimen of that compound of saturnine, and even churlish, humour with real kindness, which Scotsmen have not been indisposed to acknowledge as a national characteristic. He seems to have pleaded actual burlesque intent for his *péché de jeunesse* (as it would be called in French literary history), *The Economy of Love*. But it is difficult to discern much difference of style between this and the more respectable *Art of Preserving Health*. The preposterous latinising, which has made his 'gelid cistern' for 'cold bath' a stock quotation, and the buckram stiffness of style which usually goes with it, appear in both. His wellknown contribution to *The Castle of Indolence* itself is avowed burlesque, and not unhappy; while, though his imitations of Shakespeare are about as much like Shakespeare as they are like Walt Whitman, his *Epistle to Wilkes*, from the army in Germany to which he was attached, is not without good touches. He seems to have possessed literary, if not exactly poetical, power, but to have been the victim of personal bad taste, exaggerating a particular bad taste of the time.

Richard Glover, like Armstrong, belongs to the 'tumid and gorgeous' blank-verse division; but, unlike him, he offers not the slightest provocation to direct or indirect amusement, and, unlike him also, he has nothing of real vigour. His celebrated ballad, *Admiral Hosier's Ghost*, is a curious success; but it is not certain how much of its reproduction of the half-pathetic, half-bathetic style of the broadside is art and how much nature. Of his 'great' performances, *Leonidas* and *The Athenaid* (rash as literary prophecy is), it may, with little fear, be said that no age will ever resuscitate their popularity—a popularity which, even at the time, was not lasting and, perhaps, to some extent, had been politically engineered; while, almost certainly, the main cause of it was the already mentioned fancy for the newly resuscitated blank verse. Glover, perhaps, is not so absurd as is Blackmore: but he is equally dull in substance; and, in form, he pushes one mannerism to an

almost maddening length. The effect which Milton produces by occasional strong full-stops of sense coinciding with the metrical middle pause is well known and unquestionable. But Milton uses it carefully, and in combination with the utmost and most artful variety of other pauses, and of stopped or overrun lines. His imitators, from the first, were tempted to employ and overdo this obvious device; and Thomson himself is by no means impeccable in respect of it. Glover uses it on every possible occasion, not unfrequently in several successive lines, and not unfrequently, also, stopping where no stops should be, in order to achieve it. It is difficult to imagine, and would be hardly possible to find, even in the long list of mistaken 'long poem' writers of the past two centuries, more tedious stuff than his.

The immediate cause which places William Shenstone here next to Glover is merely chronological; but the sequence could hardly be better arranged for a reader of the two. As a relief from the probably vain attempt to read the London merchant, nothing could be better than the poems of the Worcestershire gentleman-farmer. Shenstone is not a great poet; but, perhaps, there has been a tendency, at all times, to treat him too lightly. Especially if his prose work on poetry be taken together with his poems, it may, not as a mere fancy, be found that very few of his contemporaries, perhaps none but Collins and Gray, had in them more of the root of the matter, though time and circumstance and a dawdling sentimental temperament intercepted and stunted fruit and flower. With his prose<sup>1</sup>, we are here not directly concerned; but it is certainly surprising how, in a few aphoristic touches, he lays a finger on some of the chief faults of the poetry of his day. He did not quite practise what he preached: and there is no doubt that posterity has not been wholly unjust in associating the *rococo* decorations and the trivial artifices of the Leasowes with the poems which partly show direct connection with that estate. But artificial-pastoral was only a stage on the return to real nature; and the positive achievements of Shenstone's poetry have much less of the toyshop and the marionette theatre about them than it has been customary to think or say. It is almost a pity that he was of Pembroke, Oxford; for, had he not been there, Johnson's belittling would hardly have been accompanied by a sort of patronising endeavour to make the best of it—the most damaging form of disparagement.

<sup>1</sup> See, as to his letters, chap. XI, sec. II, post.

In fact, it is very easily possible to assign him far less than his real value in the return to nature itself. When Fanny Burney, many years after his death, saw Knowle for the first time, she ranked it next to Hagley as the finest park she had seen, acknowledging, however, with frankness the culpable or regrettable absence of improvement by temples and grottoes, obelisks and view-seats. We should, of course, exactly reverse the estimate. Yet Hagley and the (as some will have it) Naboth's vineyard which patterned Hagley's beautification were only schoolmasters to bring public attention, at any rate, from town to country—if to a country 'townishly' bedizened and interfered with. The proper study of mankind ceased to be man only, when he busied himself with nature at all; even though for a time he might officiously intrude his own works upon her. One may smile at

But oh! the transport most ally'd to song  
In some fair *villa's* peaceful bound  
To catch soft *hints* from Nature's tongue  
And *bid* Arcadia bloom around—

but it is only fair to remember that the earlier part of the same poem had almost expressly condemned meddling with nature as contained in the lines

'Tis Nature only gives exclusive right  
To relish her supreme delight,

and, as if with half-surprise at its own boldness, allowed 'pregnancy of [such] delight' to 'thrifless furze' and 'rough barren rock.'

It may indeed be admitted that, both in his grounds and in his poems, Shenstone allowed the charms of the villa to overpower those of furze and rock.

One of the censor's ironical anecdotes is that 'nothing roused Shenstone's indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.' The obvious innuendo has a certain justice; but it may, to some extent, be retorted that he did try to 'stock' some part of his poetical water—very unprofitably. His *Moral Pieces*, had they stood alone, would either have excluded him from notice here altogether, or have left him with a line of condemnation. *The Judgment of Hercules* has the smoothness, but also the insignificance, of the average eighteenth century couplet; *Economy*, *The Ruined Abbey* and *Love and Honour*, the frigid bombast and the occasional sheer 'measured prose' of its worst blank-verse. If *The Progress of Taste* deserves a less harsh judgment, it is because Shenstone, there, is writing autobiographically, and, consequently,

with his heart in the matter; while, as to form, he takes refuge in the easy 'Hudibrastics' which the age generally wrote well, and sometimes excellently. But, elsewhere, if the sense of *impar congressus* is too frequently with us, there are, also, frequent alleviations; while that other and consoling sense of reading one who, at least, is a seeker after true poetry is seldom absent. *The Schoolmistress* (which, we know, was undertaken irreverently and converted the author in the writing) has generally been admitted to be one of the happiest things of its kind, so far as its author intended (and he has defined his intention very strictly) to reach. Even the tea-garden 'inscriptions' are saved by the bestknown of them, 'Here in cool grot,' which, by the exclusion of some of the unlucky poetic lingo of the time, and the substitution for it of better phrase, could be made a really charming thing. Whether there are enough good things in *Levities* to save the others is a nicer question: but, some things are certainly good. And the same is the case with *Elegies*, which occupies the other wing of his array. But it has practically long been decided that Shenstone must be judged by *The Schoolmistress* and the *Miscellaneous Poems* conscientiously subtitled 'Odes, Songs, Ballads etc.' Of *The Schoolmistress* we have spoken; of the others we may now speak.

To anyone who has read much poetry, and has thought a little about it with due mixture of criticism and affection, some—relatively many—of these pieces have a strange attraction. The true and even profound notions as to poetical substance and form which are scattered about Shenstone's prose seem to have exercised some prompting, but no restraining, influence on his verse. A seldom quoted, and not in the least hackneyed, piece, *The Song of Valentine's Day*, illustrates this, perhaps, in a more striking fashion than any other. He appears, at first, to have caught that inestimable soar and sweep of the common measure which had seemed to be lost with the latest Carolines; and the charm of it, as it were, is in the distance throughout. But he never fully masters it. Some lines, beginning with the second—

'Tis said that under distant skies,  
Nor you the fact deny—

are hopelessly prosaic. The fatal jargon of the time, 'swain' and 'grove' and the rest, pervades and mars the whole. The spell is never consummated; but the possibility is always there. Of the *Ode to Memory*, something the same may be said, and of others. His best known things, *The Dying Kid*, the *Jemmy Dawson* ballad and the four-parted *Pastoral*, are unequal, but only because they

condescend nearer to the fashion. The three-footed anapaests of the last are jingling enough, no doubt; and it is wonderful that Shenstone should not have anticipated the variations and ennoblings of the metre which, even then, though chiefly in light matter, had been sometimes hit upon, and which were perfected by Byron, Præd, and Swinburne. But there is a favour and a prettiness about them that still appeal to all but very superior persons; and not merely they, but many of their companions, show that Shenstone was certainly a 'called,' if he could not quite rise to be a 'chosen,' poet.

It may be desirable, and should certainly be permissible, to use once more the often misused comparison, and observe that, while Shenstone would probably have been a better poet, and would certainly have written better poetry, in the seventeenth or the nineteenth century, there is little probability that Mark Akenside would at any time have done better than he actually did, and small likelihood that he would ever have done so well. His only genuine appeal is to the intellect and to strictly conventionalised emotions; his method is by way of versified rhetoric; and his inspirations are political, ethical, social, or almost what you will, provided the purely poetical be excluded. It is, perhaps, not unconnected with this restricted appeal to the understanding, that hardly any poet known to us was so curiously addicted to remaking his poems. Poets of all degrees and kinds, poets as different from each other as Thomson and Tennyson, have revised their work largely; but the revision has always, or almost always, been confined to omissions, insertions and alterations for better or worse, of isolated phrase, line or passage. Akenside entirely rewrote his one long and famous poem, *The Pleasures of Imagination*<sup>1</sup>, and did something similar with several of his not very numerous smaller pieces.

Since his actual intellectual endowment was not small, and his studies (though he was an active practising physician) were sufficient, he often showed fairly adequate stuff or substance of writing. But this stuff or substance is hardly ever of itself poetical; and the poetical or quasi-poetical ornament is invariably added, decorative and merely the clothes, not the body—to borrow the Coleridgean image—of such spirit as there is.

He, therefore, shows better in poems, different as they are from each other, like the *Hymn to the Naiads* and *An Epistle to Curio*, than in his diploma piece. *The Pleasures of Imagination*

<sup>1</sup> The title of the second edition (1757) runs: *The Pleasures of the Imagination*.

might, by a bold misnomer or liberty, be used as the title of a completed *Kubla Khan*, and so might designate a magnificent poem. But, applied strictly, and in the fashion congenial to Akenside and his century, it almost inevitably means a frigid catalogue, with the items decked out in rhetorical figures and developments. The earlier form is the better; but neither is really poetry. On the other hand, the *Hymn to the Naiads*, in blank verse, does, perhaps, deserve that praise of being 'the best example of the eighteenth century kind' which has been sometimes strangely given to *The Pleasures* themselves. More than one of the *Odes* and *Inscriptions*, in their formal decorative way, have a good deal of what has been called 'frozen grace.' But only once, perhaps, does Akenside really rise to poetic bloodheat: and that is in *An Epistle to Curio*. It may deserve, from the point of view of the practical man, the ridicule that Macaulay has applied to it. But, as an example of the nobler satiric couplet, fashioned in a manner between that of Dryden and that of Pope, animated by undoubtedly genuine feeling, and launched at its object with the pulse and quiver of a well-balanced and well-flung javelin, it really has notable merit.

Such a thing as this, and such other things as semi-classical bas-reliefs in description or sentiment, Akenside could accomplish; but, except in the political kind, he has no passion, and in no kind whatever has he magnificence, or the charm of life.

If Shenstone and Akenside present an interesting parallel contrast in one way, that presented to both of them by Christopher Smart is even more interesting; while, in another way, he approximates to Collins. Akenside, with all his learning, acuteness and vigour, never found the true spirit of poetry, and, perhaps, did not even look for it, or know where it was to be found. Shenstone, conscious of its existence, and always in a half-hearted way seeking it, sometimes came near it or, at least, saw it afar off. Smart found it once for all, and once only; but that once was when he was mad. Since *A Song to David* at last gained its true place (and sometimes, perhaps, a place rather higher than that), it has been the fashion rather to undervalue the positive worth of those other poems from which, by certainly one of the oddest tricks in literary history, fortune separated the *Song* in the original edition of Smart's work, leaving it for Chalmers to find in a review fragment only, and for the nineteenth century at last to recover completely. Smart's Latin poems, original and translated, are now quite out of

fashion; and they are not, as a rule, strikingly good. He had not, when sane, the power of serious poetry; but his lighter verse in a Hudibrastic or Swiftian vein is, sometimes, really capital; and neither in those great originals, nor in Barham, nor even in Thackeray, can be found a better piece of *burla* rhyme than

Tell me, 'thou son of great Cadwallader,  
Hast thou that hare? or hast thou swallowed her?

But, in *A Song to David*, as it has been said, *furor vere poeticus* has seized and inspired his victim. It has been so much praised in the last half-century as to be, perhaps, to some extent, in the danger of Aristides; and it is anything rather than faultless. The ideas, and, indeed, much of the language, are taken at second-hand from the Bible; there is, as, in the circumstances, there almost must have been, divagation, repetition, verbiage, inequality, with other things not good in themselves. But the tide of poetry carries the poem right through, and the reader with it; the old romance-six or *rime couée*—a favourite measure with the eighteenth century, but often too suggestive of *Sir Thopas*—once more acquires soar and rush, and the blood and breath of life, so that the whole crowd of emotional thought and picturesque image sweeps through the page with irresistible force.

There is little for us that is irresistible in James Beattie or in William Falconer. But men not yet decrepit, who in their youth were fond of haunting bookstalls, may remember that few poems were commoner in 'elegant pocket editions,' as their own times would have said, than *The Minstrel* and *The Shipwreck*. We know that Byron was strongly influenced by Beattie in point of form; and it has been credibly asserted that his influence, at least in Scotland, on young readers of poetry, is not, or was not very recently, exhausted. It is difficult to think that this can have been the case with Falconer. The 'exquisite harmony of numbers' which Chalmers could discover has now completely vanished from such things as

With joyful eyes th' attentive master sees  
Th' auspicious omens of an eastern breeze;

and scarcely will any breeze, of east or west, extract that harmony again from such a lyre. The technicalities are not only unlikely to interest, but, to a great extent, are, unluckily, obsolete. The few personal touches are of the faintest; and even Falconer's Greece is a Greece which, if it was ever living, has ceased to live now. His smaller poems are few and insignificant.

Beattie, on the other hand, retains at least a historic interest as a pioneer of romanticism, and as the most serious and extensive handler, up to his own time, of the Spenserian stanza. He was hampered in general effect inasmuch as, if he was possessed of any strictly poetic faculty, it was of a singularly small and weak one; and he hampered himself in a special way by failing to observe that, to make a Spenserian stanza, you need a Spenserian line and Spenserian line-groupings. As it was (and he taught the fault to Byron), the great merit of the form—its complex and yet absolutely fluent harmony—is broken up by suggestions, now of the couplet, now of the old dramatic blank-verse line, now, again, of the Miltonic or pseudo-Miltonic paragraph arrangement. Nor, though the matter might more than compensate contemporaries and immediate posterity for a defect in manner which they would hardly notice, is it such as can give much enjoyment either now, or ever again. That it is not only plotless and characterless but, also, unfinished, need not be fatal. It has hills and vales and other properties of romanticism *à la Rousseau*; suggestions of knights and witches and so forth in the manner of romanticism *à la Percy*. But the drawing is all in watered-out sepia; the melody is a hurdy-gurdy strum.

His minor poems are more numerous than Falconer's and intend much more greatly: but they have little more significance. He tries Gray's ode manner, and he tries his elegy manner: and he fails in both. A tolerable opening, such as that of *Retirement*:

When in the crimson cloud of even,  
The lingering light decays,  
And Hesper on the front of Heaven  
His glistening gem displays

is followed by some twenty times the number of lines mostly rubbish. The *Pastorals*, if less silly, are not much better than pastorals usually are; and the most that can be said for *The Judgment of Paris*, wherein Beattie employs the elegiac quatrain, is that it is rather less bad than one would expect—a fact which may account for its unpopularity at the time as well as for its omission from his collected poems<sup>1</sup>.

The poets—for, in a few cases, they most certainly deserve that name—and the verse-writers—an indefeasible title—who have been mentioned in this and in an earlier chapter<sup>2</sup> do not require

<sup>1</sup> As to Beattie's once celebrated *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*, cf. *ch&p.* *mv*, *post*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, vol. ix, chap. vi, sec. ii.

any peroration with much circumstance. But it would not only be uncivil to give them none; it would amount to a sort of petty treason in failing to make good their claims to the place they have here received. This place is, perhaps, justified in one case only—that of Collins—by the possession of intrinsic genius of the strictly poetical kind, in quality if not in quantity, sufficient to have made its way in any age; though, undoubtedly, in some ages, it would have been more fertile than in this. Yet Collins acquires not only interest but intelligibility when he is considered in company with those who have been associated with him here. ‘Why was he not as they?’ ‘What was it that weighed on him as on them?’ These are questions which those who disdain the historic estimate—who wish to ‘like grossly,’ as Dryden put it—may disdain likewise. They add to the delight as much, at least, as they satisfy the intelligence of better exercised tastes. So, again, in various ways, Garth and Watts, Young and Dyer and Green, Shenstone and Akenside and Smart, have special attractions—sometimes, if not always, strictly poetical; always, perhaps, strictly literary—in one way or another, sufficient to satisfy fit readers, if they cannot abide the same test as Collins. And so, in their turn, have even the *numerus*, the crowd of what some harshly call poetasters, whom we have also included. They, also, in their day and way, obeyed the irresistible seduction which urges a man to desert prose and to follow the call of poetry. They did not go far or do much; but they went as far and did as much as they could.

## CHAPTER VIII

### JOHNSON AND BOSWELL

IT was a supreme fortune that gave Johnson the friendship of Reynolds and Boswell. His great personality is still an active and familiar force. We know him as well as if he had lived among us. But the first of Reynolds's portraits was painted when Johnson had completed *The Rambler* and was already 'the great moralist,' and Boswell did not meet him till after he had obtained his pension. The Johnson that we know is the Johnson 'who loves to fold his legs and have his talk out.' The years in which he fought poverty and gained his place in the world of letters are obscure to us, in comparison with those in which he enjoyed his hard-won leisure. He never cared, in later life, to speak about his early struggles; he never spoke much about himself at any time. Even when he wrote the lives of authors whom he had known and might have told his own experiences without disturbing the unity of his picture, he offered little more than the reflection of his feelings. Sir John Hawkins did not make full use of his great opportunity. He alone, of all Johnson's biographers, had known him almost from the start of their work in London, but he drew on his recollections fitfully and lazily. He has given enough to show how much more he might have given. Boswell, with all his pertinacious curiosity, found that he had to rely mainly on his own researches. There were in these early years subjects 'too delicate to question Johnson upon.' Much remained, and still remains, for others to discover.

New letters, anecdotes or facts will not disturb our idea of Johnson<sup>1</sup>. They will, at most, fill gaps and settle doubts. The man himself is known. Yet the very greatness of his personality has tended to interfere with the recognition of his greatness as a

<sup>1</sup> A large amount of new material on Johnson's family and early life has recently been made accessible in *The Reades of Blackwood Hill and Dr Johnson's Ancestry* (1906) by Meade, A. L., and in his *Johnsonian Gleanings* (1909 etc.). New material on his later life is given in Broadley and Seccombe's *Doctor Johnson and Mrs Thrale* (1910).

man of letters. No other author whose profession was literature seems to owe so little of his fame to his books. Many writers, Dryden and Scott among others, give the impression that they were greater than anything that they have written. It has been the unique fate of Johnson to be dissociated from his works. He would have welcomed the knowledge that he was to be remembered as a man, for he had no delusions about authorship. But he is to be found in his works as he wished to be known, and as he was. If the greatest of biographies catches him at moments which he would not have recorded, it is also true that his writings give us his more intimate thoughts, and take us into regions which were denied to his conversation.

He was born at Lichfield on 18 September 1709, in the year in which his father, one of the chief booksellers of the midlands, was sheriff of the city. As a schoolboy, he seems to have been already distinguished by his ease in learning, his tenacity of memory, his lack of application, and delays adjusted to his power of rapid work. But the best part of his instruction he acquired for himself in his father's shop. There, he prowled about at leisure, and read as his fancy directed. He was never a laborious reader. The progress which the understanding makes through a book, he said, has more pain than pleasure in it. 'Sir; do you read books through?' he once asked. There may have been few books that he read through himself. His defective eyesight had probably some bearing on what came to be an intellectual habit. But he had in a supreme degree the gift of discovering the matter and quality of a book, almost on opening its pages. The extent of his knowledge was the wonder of all his friends: Adam Smith declared that Johnson knew more books than any man alive. He had begun this knowledge by sampling his father's store. And in these days, before he had left school, he was already a good enough Latinist to be diverted from a search for apples by the discovery of a folio of Petrarch.

He was intended to follow his father's business. Hawkins and Mrs Piozzi both say that he could bind a book. But, after two years at home, he contrived to proceed to Oxford. He entered Pembroke college as a commoner on 31 October 1728, and remained there continuously, with, at most, one week's break in the long vacation, till December 1729. Thereafter, his residence was irregular, and he left the university without taking a degree<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Boswell says he left 'in autumn, 1731.' There is much support for this date in Hawkins. But Croker argued that he never returned after December 1729, though his

The outstanding fact of his college career was the translation of Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse, as a Christmas exercise. This was the first of his works that was printed, being included in *A Miscellany of Poems by Several Hands* (1731), collected by J. Husbands, fellow of Pembroke college. Latin was already almost as familiar a language to him as his own. Late in life, during his tour in France, he was 'resolute in speaking Latin,' though he had a command of French idiom that enabled him to supply the first paragraph to Baret's translation of *Rasselas*<sup>1</sup>. 'Though he is a great critic in French,' said Baret, 'and knows almost as much Italian as I do, he cannot speak either language, but he talks Latin with all Cicero's fury<sup>2</sup>.' His knowledge of the renaissance poets was unusually wide. He regretted that they were not generally known, and that Pope's attempt to rescue them from neglect by his *Selecta Poemata Italorum* had been fruitless. The first book which he himself designed was an edition of Politian, with a history of Latin poetry in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Proposals for printing it by subscription were issued in August 1734; but nothing came of the scheme, and the Latin poems of Politian still await an editor.

Of his five and a half years in the midlands after his residence in Oxford, the records are fragmentary. His earliest extant letter (30 October 1731) has reference to an unsuccessful application for the post of usher in the grammar school of Stourbridge. He acted in this capacity for some time, in 1732, at Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire. Later in the same year, he paid a visit to his lifelong friend Edmund Hector, then settled as a surgeon in Birmingham; and it would appear that Birmingham was his home for the next three years<sup>3</sup>. What is certain is that his hopes had now turned to writing. He contributed to *The Birmingham Journal* a number of essays, all of which are lost; he planned his edition of Politian; he offered to write for *The Gentleman's Magazine*; and he completed his first book, *A Voyage to Abyssinia*,

name remained on the books till October 1781; and this view has been commonly adopted. The arguments for residence till 1781 remain the stronger.

<sup>1</sup> See Prior's *Life of Malone* (1860), p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> See *Giuseppe Baret's*, Collinson-Morley, L. (1909), p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> The issue of the Politian proposals at Lichfield in August 1734 appears to be the only evidence for the common statement that he then returned to Lichfield. It was to be expected that the subscriptions should be received by his brother Nathaniel, who, with his mother, had carried on the family business from the death of his father in 1781. *A Voyage to Abyssinia* was all written at Birmingham. If it was completed before August 1734, there must have been a delay of six months in publication. The letter to *The Gentleman's Magazine* was written from Birmingham on 25 November 1734.

by Father Jerome Lobo. With a Continuation of the History of Abyssinia, and Fifteen Dissertations, by Mr Le Grand. From the French. The volume was printed in Birmingham and published in London, anonymously, in January 1735.

In this translation, there is much more of Le Grand than of Lobo. In parts, Johnson condensed freely; where he allowed himself least liberty was in the sixteen (not fifteen) dissertations, which occupy more than half the volume and deal with such subjects as the Nile, Prester John, the queen of Sheba and the religious customs of the Abyssinians. He was always an eager reader of books of travel; and it was fitting that the passion for whatever afforded views of human nature, which led him to describe his own experiences of another country and to urge others to describe theirs, should be shown in his first work. But the main interest of the volume now lies in the short preface. In the translation, he is content to convey the meaning of the original, and, while he follows in haste another's thought and language, we fail to find the qualities of his own style. But they are unmistakable in such a passage as this:

The Reader will here find no Regions cursed with irremediable Barrenness, or bless'd with Spontaneous Fecundity, no perpetual Gloom or unceasing Sunshine; nor are the Nations here described either devoid of all Sense of Humanity, or consummate in all private and social Virtues, here are no Hottentots without Religion, Polity, or Articulate Language, no Chinese perfectly Polite, and compleatly skill'd in all Sciences: He will discover, what will always be discover'd by a diligent and impartial Enquirer, that wherever Human Nature is to be found, there is a mixture of Vice and Virtue, a contest of Passion and Reason, and that the Creator doth not appear Partial in his Distributions, but has balanced in most Countries their particular Inconveniences by particular Favours.

He who writes much, Johnson said, will not easily escape a manner. But here is Johnson's manner in his first book. And here, too, is a forecast of the philosophy of *The Rambler* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. There are no distinct periods in Johnson's literary development, no sudden access of power, no change in his outlook, no novelties in his methods. He continued as he had begun. He grew in confidence and facility; he perfected his command of expression; but there was not any change in the spirit of his expression or in what he wished to express.

His experience of letters at Birmingham had not promised success, and, on his marriage in July 1735 with Mrs Elizabeth Porter, the widow of one of his Birmingham friends, he set up a school at Edial, near Lichfield. His first reference to the new

enterprise is found in a letter of 25 June 1735, recently published for the first time<sup>1</sup>.

'I am going,' he writes, 'to furnish a House-in the Country and keep a private Boarding-house for Young Gentlemen whom I shall endeavour to instruct in a method somewhat more rational than those commonly practised.'

His 'scheme for the classes of a grammar school,' as given by Hawkins and Boswell, illustrates what he was to say about teaching in his *Life of Milton*. The school failed, and, on 2 March 1737, he set out for London with one of his pupils, David Garrick. Henceforward, London was to be his home. Having no profession, he became by necessity an author.

He had no promise of work, but he looked to find employment on *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and he had hopes in the drama. He had written at Edial three acts of his tragedy *Irene*<sup>2</sup>. He worked at it during his first months in London, and finished it on his visit to Lichfield to settle his affairs, in the summer of 1737. But there remained for him 'the labour of introducing it on the stage, an undertaking which to an ingenuous mind was in a very high degree vexatious and disgusting'—as he wrote of another's experience while his own tragedy was still unacted. The goodwill of Garrick, whom he placed under a heavy debt by the great prologue which heralded his managership of Drury lane in 1747, at last brought it on the stage in February 1749<sup>3</sup>, and protracted its run to nine nights, so that there might be three third-night benefits. With all his knowledge of human nature, Johnson was unable to exhibit dramatically the shades which distinguish one character from another. *Irene* is only a moral poem in a succession of dialogues on the theme that 'Peace from innocence must flow' and 'none are happy but the wise and virtuous.' And the thought struggles with the metre. He could not divest his blank verse of the qualities of the couplet. The same faults are to be found in his translation, made many years later, of a short passage of Metastasio. We expect the rhyme at the end of the line; and, when we come on it in the couplets with which each act

<sup>1</sup> *Bi-Centenary of the Birth of Johnson. Commemoration Festival Reports*, edited by Baby, J. T. (1909), pp. 26—7.

<sup>2</sup> It was founded on a story in Knolles's *History of the Turks*, previously treated in *The Tragedy of The Unhappy Fair Irene*, by Gilbert Swinhoe, 1658; *Irena, a Tragedy*, of unknown authorship, 1664; and *Irene, or the Fair Greek*, by Charles Goring, 1708. Before Knolles, the same subject had been treated in Peele's lost play *The Turkish Mahamet and Hyrin the fair Greek* (see Peele, ed. Bullen, A. H., vol. 1, p. xxxvii, and vol. II, p. 394).

<sup>3</sup> The title on the play-bills was *Mahomet and Irene*. See *An Essay on Tragedy*, 1749, p. 12 note, and Genest, *English Stage*, 1832, vol. IV, pp. 265—6.

closes, instead of feeling that they are tags, as we do in our great tragedies, we find the verse bound forward with unwonted ease. Johnson had too massive and too logical an intellect to adapt himself readily to the drama. He came to perceive this, but not till long after he had described the qualifications of a dramatist in his *Life of Savage*, and had proceeded with a second play, *Charles of Sweden*, of which the only record is an ambiguous allusion in a letter (10 June 1742). The labour he spent on *Irene* led him to think well of it for a time; but, late in life, when he returned to it afresh, he agreed with the common verdict. He 'thought it had been better.' He could speak from his own experience when, in the passage on tediousness in his *Life of Prior*, he said that 'unhappily this pernicious failure is that which an author is least able to discover.'

It was *The Gentleman's Magazine* that gave Johnson his real start as a man of letters. Founded by Edward Cave, under the name Sylvanus Urban, in January 1731, it had been growing steadily from small beginnings. Its original purpose was to reprint, from month to month, a selection of the more interesting matter that had appeared in the journals; and the name 'magazine' was, in this its first application to a periodical, intended as a modest title for a collection which made small claim to originality. The idea was not altogether new. *The Grub-street Journal* contains a section of 'domestic news' extracted from other papers, and sometimes so treated as to suggest to the modern reader the more urbane comments in the pages of *Punch*. But, as the editors of *The Grub-street Journal* complained in the preface to *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-street* (1737), their rival of *The Gentleman's Magazine* took anything he fancied—news, letters, essays or verses—and printed as much or as little of them as he pleased. The success of the *Magazine* was never in doubt. The first number went into a fifth edition; and with success came ambition. In the number for January 1739, a correspondent, who evidently was Johnson, observes that the extracts from the weekly journalists have 'shrunk at length into a very few columns and made way for original letters and dissertations.' The *Magazine* now included parliamentary reports, poetical essays, serial stories, mathematical papers, maps, songs with music, and a register of publications. Most of the devices of modern journalism were anticipated in these early numbers. Cave had the luck and the skill to hit on what the public wanted. If we may trust the preface to the collected numbers for 1738, there were immediately 'almost twenty imitations.' Yet *The Gentleman's*

*Magazine* had many features in common with *The Gentleman's Journal*; or the *Monthly Miscellany*, which Peter Motteux had started in January 1692 and carried on with flagging zeal to 1694. The earlier periodical had begun on a much higher literary level and remains a work of very great interest; but its fortunes were not watched over by a man of business. It had been modelled partly on *Le Mercure Galant*. *The Gentleman's Magazine* was, in its origin, independent of both its French and its English forerunners.

In the letter which Johnson sent to Cave from Birmingham in 1734, besides offering to contribute, he suggested several improvements. For 'the low jests, awkward buffoonery, or the dull scurrilities of either party,' which were to procure for it or its imitators a place in *The Dunciad*, might be substituted, he thought, 'short literary dissertations in Latin or English, critical remarks on authors ancient or modern, or loose pieces worth preserving.' Nothing came of the letter; but the suggestion that the *Magazine* should take itself more seriously accorded with Cave's business instincts, and the changes gradually introduced were in accordance with Johnson's wishes. His first contribution, the Latin alcaics beginning *Urbane, nullis fesse laboribus*, did not appear till March 1738. From that time, he was regularly employed; and he at once asserted some sort of literary control. There cannot be any doubt that the subsequent steady rise in the character of the *Magazine* was largely due to him. He also helped to guide its fortunes through a grave crisis. Reports of the proceedings and debates in parliament had been given in the *Magazine* since 1732; but, on 13 April 1738, the House of Commons declared such reports to be 'a notorious breach of the Privilege of this House.' The *Magazine* could not easily omit a section on which much of its popularity depended, and, in June 1738, there appeared 'debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia.' If, as Hawkins says, the device was Cave's, it had Johnson's approval; and his hand is unmistakable in the passage in which the device is explained. He began by editing the reports, which continued to be written by William Guthrie, the first of his many Scottish friends. He was their sole author only for the thirty-six numbers and supplements from July 1741 to March 1744, and author rather than reporter. According to Hawkins, he had never entered either House; according to Murphy, he had once found his way into the House of Commons. He expanded in Cave's printing office, long after the actual debates, the scanty notes supplied to him, and invested them with his own argumentative skill and eloquence. Some of

the speeches are said to represent what was said by more than one speaker; others he described as the mere coinage of his imagination. His reports are, in fact, original work, and a very great work. To us who know the secret of their authorship, it is surprising that they should not have been recognised as the work of a man of letters. They are on a high level of literary excellence, and there is an-obvious uniformity in the style. Even when they succeed in suggesting the idiosyncrasies of the different speakers, they show one cast of mind and texture of language. They are Johnson's own debates on the political questions of the day, based—and based only—on the debates in parliament. He said, within a few days of his death, that he wrote them 'with more velocity' than any other work—often three columns of the *Magazine* within the hour, and, once, ten pages between noon and early evening. The wonder is, not so much that debates thus written could have been so good, as that debates so good could have been accepted as giving the words of the speakers. Johnson had not expected this; and, when he recognised it, he determined not to be any longer 'accessory to the propagation of falsehood.' This is the explanation given for his sudden abandonment of them in 1744. But the secret was long kept, and they continued to be regarded as genuine. There is more of Johnson than of Pitt in the famous speech about 'the atrocious crime of being a young man.' And two speeches entirely written by him appeared, to his amusement, in the collected works of Chesterfield.

The extent of his other contributions cannot easily be determined. We have often only the evidence of style to guide us, and his editorial privileges make it difficult to apply. It is very doubtful, for instance, if the short notice, in November 1739, of the poems of Joseph Warton and Collins printed in the previous number is, as Wooll states in his *Memoirs of Warton*, the work of Johnson. Our best authority is Boswell, but his list is only tentative. We know that he wrote the biographies of Sarpi, Boerhaave, Blake, Drake, Barretier, Lewis Morin, Burmann and Sydenham; and there are other articles about which there can be no reasonable doubt. The amount of his writing varies greatly from month to month. In the number for December 1740, which contains his *Essay on Epitaphs*, most of the original contributions are his; in other numbers, we cannot safely ascribe to him more than the debates. The question of authorship has never been examined thoroughly; but, even with the help of Cave's office books, there would be serious obstacles to a

conclusive finding. In addition to his work for Cave, he had brought out, with other publishers, *Marmor Norfolciense* (April 1739), an ironical discussion, with a political bearing, on the supposed discovery of a prophecy in 'monkish rhyme,' and *A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage* (May 1739), an ironical attack on the rejection of Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa*. Continued irony is rarely successful. Johnson did not try it again.

The early series of biographies was followed by the elaborate life of a poet whom Johnson had known intimately, and whose character required protection from the insults and calumnies which it invited. Richard Savage died in the prison of Bristol at the beginning of August 1743; and, in the number of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for the same month, Johnson announced, in an unsigned letter, that a biography of him was in preparation. • He wrote it with his usual speed—once he wrote as much as forty-eight printed pages at a sitting—and had it published in February 1744. It is a work of remarkable and varied interest, and throws light on a period of Johnson's career of which we know too little. They had suffered poverty together and forgotten it in their companionship; they had spent whole nights in the streets when their combined resources could not find them a shelter; and the description of Savage's fortunes reflects what Johnson had himself endured, and might have still to endure. He was attracted to Savage by the story of his life, on which research had not yet cast any doubt, by his shrewd knowledge of human nature, by his social skill and experience and by his talent as a writer. Savage was eleven years older than Johnson, and in his varied life had much to tell. But the chief attraction was Savage's own character. His great capacities could not save him from his undoing. He was self-indulgent, petulant, aggressive and ungrateful; there was excuse for the indifference or resentment of those who had once been benefactors. All this Johnson brings out clearly in a narrative which, when it leans from impartiality, leans to the side of friendship. He related everything as he knew it, with no suggestion of censure, but with generous sympathy. *The Life of Savage* is one of those rare biographies which, by their perfect sincerity, tell us as much of the character of the author as of the man described. He included it, later, with only slight alterations, in *The Lives of the Poets*. It had been an adequate expression of his feelings when it was written, and he wisely decided to let well alone. But it is a different *Life* from the other *Lives*, and differs from them in more than scale and method. It is the study of a personality

rather than of a poet, though at no time would Johnson have tried to make such a distinction. The criticism of Savage's works is the least part of it, and has not yet all the writer's easy mastery. The style, too, which, at its best, is as good as it ever was to be, sometimes lacks its later certainty and precision. And the frequent repetition of the same ideas, though always in different language, shows a desire to give in full the content of a full mind rather than to represent it by selection. The new setting of *The Life of Savage* invites a comparison which proves that Johnson's abilities were strengthening and maturing to his seventieth year. Yet he never revealed himself more fully than in this early tribute to the memory of a difficult friend.

Johnson's contributions to *The Gentleman's Magazine* had become less frequent in 1743, and they ceased in the following year. He was meditating larger schemes. And he had latterly been doing much other work. Since the end of 1742, he had been engaged with William Oldys in cataloguing the printed books in the library of the earl of Oxford, then newly purchased by Thomas Osborne, the bookseller. The *Proposals* for printing the catalogue by subscription were written by Johnson and issued in December 1742, and the *Account of the Harleian Library*, which they contained, was afterwards made to serve as preface to the first of the four volumes of the catalogue—*Catalogus Bibliothecae Harleianae*, 1743—4. While the catalogue was in progress, the bookseller, who had remarkable luck in having secured the services of one of the greatest of English literary antiquaries and one of the most scholarly of English critics, was persuaded to publish a collection of the more scarce and valuable tracts or pamphlets in his possession, under the title *The Harleian Miscellany*. The bulk of the selective and editorial work fell to Oldys; but it was Johnson who, again, wrote the *Proposals*, and contributed the introduction (1744), which, when reprinted separately, he entitled *An Essay on the Origin and Importance of Small Tracts and Fugitive Pieces*. In this, his first attempt at literary history, he gives a short sketch of English pamphlets from the reformation to the reign of Charles II, and follows in the tracks of such works as *The Phenix* (1707) and *The Phoenix Britannicus* (1731), *The Critical History of Pamphlets* (1716) of Myles Davies, and the *Dissertation on Pamphlets* (1731) of his collaborator Oldys. There is no evidence of Johnson's hand in the *Harleian Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1745).

On the completion of this congenial experience in bibliography,

Johnson proposed to edit Shakespeare. The work was not to be undertaken for many years yet; but it was the first of the larger schemes planned by him. *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth*<sup>1</sup> (April 1745) was intended to prepare the way. There was still room for a new edition, as Hanmer had given most thought to regularised metre and sumptuous printing, and Warburton seemed to have abandoned what he had announced as early as 1740. But, after the death of Pope and the completion of Hanmer's edition in 1744, Warburton set to work in earnest, and the prospect of early publication compelled Johnson to lay aside his scheme, which could not have had an equal chance of success, inasmuch as, like most of his work up to this time, it was anonymous. When Warburton's edition appeared, in 1747, Johnson had the meagre satisfaction of finding his *Miscellaneous Observations* singled out for praise in the vituperative preface. It was now that he turned to the *Dictionary*. He had 'long thought of it,' he said; 'it had grown up in his mind insensibly.' The *Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language* was issued in 1747, and, at the desire of Dodsley, was addressed to the earl of Chesterfield. This year—which is, also, the year of the Drury lane prologue—marks the turn in Johnson's fortunes, though the fitful struggle with poverty was not yet over. But what was Johnson doing in 1745 and 1746? Here again the records are deficient. Of more than a thousand letters of his that are known, there is not one to throw light on either of these years.

Johnson did not confine himself to the labours of the *Dictionary*. During the eight years of its preparation he wrote his greatest poem, and gave new life to the periodical essay.

His school verses, which were preserved by the pride of a teacher and the admiration of a friend, and printed by Boswell, are of little interest except in relation to his later work. They show the study of *The Rape of the Lock* and the translation of Homer, and they occasionally indulge in the liberties of Dryden's triple rime and alexandrine—liberties from which Johnson afterwards refrained, though he came to say that the art of concluding the sense in couplets 'has perhaps been with rather too much constancy pursued'. The piece entitled 'The Young Authour' is a first study for the great passage in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*

<sup>1</sup> The title continues:—*To which is affix'd, Proposals for a New Edition of Shakespeare, with a Specimen*. No copy is known to contain the *Proposals*. They were, however, issued separately. The Bodleian library possesses the rare folio sheet, MS Bodl. Add. C. 244 (387).

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Denham*.

on the scholar's life, and, in the music of the metre, and in the turn and balance of the expression, already discovers the quality of his mature verse. He acquired a reputation for ease in writing and for readiness to help a friend in need. His verses *Written at the request of a gentleman to whom a lady had given a sprig of myrtle* were remembered as having been made in five minutes, and those *To Miss Hickman, playing on the Spinnet*, or others like them, led the girl's father to opine that their author could write about anything. What he called 'the endearing elegance of female friendship' had been, long before he met Mrs Thrale, an effective spur to his facility. Some of the pieces written while he was still in search of occupation in the midlands afterwards found their way into *The Gentleman's Magazine* and Mrs Williams's *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1766). None of them is more characteristic than *Friendship, An Ode*. On the other hand, the collected editions include several pieces clearly not his. He could not have written *To Lyce, an elderly Lady*. It is no less certain that, though he did write some verses *To Stella*, the chance that a piece is addressed to Stella is not, as his editors seem to have believed, an argument of his authorship. His early poems have still to be discriminated<sup>1</sup>; but their chief interest will always be that they were written by the author of *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.

*London: a poem, in imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal* was published in May 1738, on the same day as Pope's *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-Eight, a Dialogue something like Horace*, and thus, accidentally, invited a comparison which appears to have gone in Johnson's favour. Here was a new author who concealed his name, rivalling Pope in the very kind of verse which, after an undisputed career, he had found best suited to his genius. The poem went into a second edition within a week; and Pope himself, who was always generous in his recognition of excellence, and had said of Johnson's youthful translation of his *Messiah* that posterity would have to decide which form of the poem was the original, declared that the unknown author of *London* could not be long concealed. The method of 'imitation' adopted in this poem was described by Johnson in his *Life of Pope* as 'a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable and

<sup>1</sup> Boswell promised an edition of the poems, in which he would 'with the utmost care ascertain their authenticity, and illustrate them with notes and various readings.' Such an edition has not yet appeared.

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the parallels lucky.' Brought into *vogue* by Boileau, it had been practised in English by Rochester, Oldham and Dryden (in his revision of Soames's translation of Boileau's *Art Poétique*), and many others; and it had recently been perfected by Pope, who had so written that a knowledge of the original might enhance the appreciation, but should not be indispensable to it. Juvenal's *Third Satire* lent itself to imitation and had already been copied by Boileau and Oldham. The chief criticism to be urged against Johnson's poem is that it does not show Pope's art in escaping from its model. He was still timid enough to wish to show himself scholar as well as poet. When he wrote that 'falling houses thunder on your head,' or that the midnight murderer 'leaves unseen a dagger in your breast,' he thought more of Juvenal than of modern fact. The need of a parallel forces him to say, 'I cannot bear a French metropolis'; but this was not the London described in Voltaire's *Lettres Anglaises*. He himself admitted (in a manuscript note) that the description of Orgilio was 'no picture of modern manners, though it might be true at Rome.' His own opinion on the advantages of country life we shall find, not here, but in the passage on scenes of flowery felicity and the melody of the nightingale in *The Life of Savage*. His political views are more truly represented: the references to excise and pensions, as well as to patrons, anticipate the definitions in the *Dictionary*. But it is when Juvenal leads him to speak of poverty that he expresses his own feelings in his own person.

None of these objections can be urged against *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, written in imitation of Juvenal's *Tenth Satire* and published, with Johnson's name, in January 1749. There is nothing in this poem to suggest to those unacquainted with the model that it is an imitation; it is, indeed, not so much an imitation as a companion study by one who, amid different circumstances, took a very similar view of life. Instead of the Roman illustrations, we have modern instances of hopes that lay in power, and learning, and war, and long life and beauty. The pictures of Wolsey and Charles of Sweden, and the description of the lot of the scholar, are distinct studies of human ambition, each complete in itself and easily taken from its setting, but all viewed in the same light, and united by the one lesson of inevitable disappointment. The poem is completely satisfying as a statement of its theme. It is not less valuable as a personal document. There is nothing in it but what Johnson consistently thought and felt. He was wont to say that there is more to be endured than

enjoyed in the general condition of human life; and he had found that human happiness, if it ever comes, must come by our own effort. The concluding lines which he supplied many years later to Goldsmith's *Traveller* state his invariable experience. In *The Life of Savage* he had said that happiness is to be placed only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; and he had said much the same in *Irene*. But there were times when he doubted even this. 'Where then shall hope and fear their objects find?' In his simple piety, he gave himself to the earnest exercise of religion. His *Prayers*, which were made public after his death, will win the admiration alike of idle curiosity and of doubting reason. And so, with his habitual sincerity, he gave to *The Vanity of Human Wishes* a religious conclusion which reflected his own practice. He was no pessimist. The sense of vanity may keep us from thinking that things are better than they are, but it need not make us think that they are worse. He would maintain in talk that the world was not half so wicked as it was represented to be, that there was very little gross wickedness in it, and very little extraordinary virtue. This we are told explicitly by Mrs Piozzi, and we may learn it for ourselves from his writings.

Shortly before he wrote *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, he had aided Dodsley in planning *The Preceptor* (April 1748), a substantial work containing 'a general course of education,' and had contributed to it the preface and *The Vision of Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe*. He told Percy that he thought this fable the best thing he ever wrote. It states the part which he assigned to religion in the conduct of life, and should be read as a supplement to *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. It may, also, be regarded as a prelude to *The Rambler*.

This paper began on Tuesday, 20 March 1750, and ended, with its 208th number, on Saturday, 14 March 1752, three days before the death of Johnson's wife.

~~He~~ He that condemns himself to compose on a stated day, will often bring to his task, an attention dissipated, a memory overwhelmed, an imagination embarrassed, a mind distracted with anxieties, and a body languishing with

So he wrote in the last number, reviewing his experiences.

But the paper appeared regularly every Tuesday and Saturday, though the printer might complain of the late hour of receiving the copy. The very title was chosen in haste. Johnson meant it to announce that he would pass in each essay from subject to subject. But it was not suited to his majestic deliberations. There

is nothing of the rambler in any single essay. Each pursues its way in a steady, unswerving march<sup>1</sup>.

The conditions amid which Johnson revived the periodical essay differed widely from those amid which it originally flourished. In the interval of forty years, there had been a development of journalistic enterprise which was not paralleled in any other country. More than 150 periodicals, of one kind or another, had been meeting the needs of the reading public, and contributing to its steady growth in size and power. Some of these were on the model of *The Spectator*, while others, written with a different purpose, or planned to include a greater variety of matter, showed its influence. The periodical essay no longer offered any of the attractions of novelty. In its strict form, it was a type of journalism that was being crushed out of favour by politics and news. By 1750, *The Gentleman's Magazine* enjoyed a secure popularity, and had its rivals; and, in the previous year, *The Monthly Review* had been established. The time was not auspicious for beginning a paper devoted exclusively to meditations on matters of no immediate interest, without the assistance of any item of news, or of a single advertisement. But, in *The Rambler*, the periodical essay reasserted itself, and entered on the second of its two great decades, that of *The Rambler*, *The Adventurer*, *The World*, *The Connoisseur*, *The Idler* and *The Citizen of the World*.

The effect of *The Rambler* was the more remarkable, in that Johnson was deficient in the qualifications of a periodical writer. The maxim that 'the drama's laws the drama's patrons give' is equally true of the essay. It was not in Johnson's nature to bow to the public, however much he believed in its ultimate verdict. He spoke in his first number as if success depended on the choice of subject. But, in the treatment of his choice, he lacked the art of going to meet his readers; and they never came in great numbers. The circulation of *The Rambler* was only about 500 copies. But it raised the literary level of the periodical essay and set a standard of excellence to such papers as *The World*, whose sale was numbered in thousands.

It found a larger public on being reprinted in volume form, and came to be the only periodical of the century to vie with *The*

<sup>1</sup> Such slight assistance as he received is scrupulously acknowledged in the last number. Four papers were written by others: no. 80 by Mrs Catharine Talbot, nos. 44 and 100 by Mrs Elizabeth Carter, and no. 97 by Samuel Richardson; and six letters were contributed, the four in no. 10 by Hester Mulso, afterwards Mrs Chapone; the second in no. 15 and the second in no. 107, both of unknown authorship.

*Spectator* in popularity. Johnson revised it for the collected edition with unusual care<sup>1</sup>. It had been his most ambitious work; and he knew that it was best suited to a leisurely perusal. Yet there is little in *The Rambler* that is now well known. Much of its literary criticism was superseded by the preface to his *Shakespeare* and by his *Lives of the Poets*. The allegories and stories have not the reputation of their models in *The Spectator*. Nor are Johnson's characters familiar as Addison's are. The explanation lies mainly in his inability to visualise. He did not number the streaks of the tulip because, in effect, he did not see them; but he remarked general properties and large appearances because he had the gift, which he assiduously developed, of viewing things in their moral aspects and human relationships. The real interest of the famous passage in *Rasselas* on the aims of the poet—a passage which, it must be remembered, leads to the humorous conclusion that 'no human being can ever be a poet'—lies in its personal basis. The best poets of his century, and the poets of all time whom he most admired, numbered the streaks when they wished. But he did not number them, because they did not enter into his experience. We do not give a face or figure to any of his characters in *The Rambler*, because he did not see either clearly himself. Polyphilus, the quick wit without purpose; Suspirius, the fault-finder; Quisquilius, the virtuoso; Venustulus, the effeminate beau—are, each of them, bundles of habits, or a predominant habit. Even Prospero, who might have been drawn from Garrick, represents only the social failings of the rich man who has risen in life. Johnson reverted to the methods of the character-studies of the seventeenth century. Addison had set out by continuing them, but he was at war with them at heart, and he adapted them to his purpose. The superiority of Addison in this respect will never be denied. But Johnson shows a deeper knowledge of human nature 'in all its gradations,' and, while he lacks the familiar elegance which alone can play with foibles and frivolities, he offers a richer harvest of deep observation.

<sup>1</sup>According to Alexander Chalmers, 'the alterations made by Dr Johnson in the second and third editions of *The Rambler* far exceed six thousand.' Cf. Drake, Nathan, *Essays illustrative of the Rambler*, 1809, vol. 1, pp. 273—280. Johnson created an impression that his care for his works ceased at their publication; but, to adopt his phrase about Pope, his parental fondness did not immediately abandon them. Boswell says that, in 1781, Johnson had not looked at *Rasselas* since it was first published; but he does not add that a comparison of the editions of 1759 and 1783 shows a considerable number of alterations. The poems were revised: James Boswell the younger transcribed into his copy of the edition of 1789 the 'notes and various readings' in 'Johnson's own handwriting on a copy of the fifth edition' of *London*.

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And Johnson had not the desire, even had he possessed the ability, to disguise his purpose. Addison, too, had been frankly didactic; he had said that he meant to bring philosophy to dwell on tea-tables and in coffeehouses. But he kept his readers from suspecting that they were being taught or reformed. Johnson's lessons are obvious. His aim was 'only the propagation of truth'; it was always his 'principal design to inculcate wisdom or piety.' The great moralist lavishes the best instruction he can offer, the instruction of a man of the world who knows what the world cannot give; but he does not offer it in a way to attract unwilling attention. He recognised this himself and admitted that 'the severity of dictatorial instruction has been too seldom relieved.' His deep humour is present throughout, and is occasionally given scope, as in the essay on the advantages of living in a garret; but it is always controlled by the serious purpose.

In concluding *The Rambler*, he stated that he had laboured 'to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations.' At this time he was in the midst of a similar and greater task in his *Dictionary of the English Language*. Most of the earlier English dictionaries, to the beginning of the eighteenth century, had been dictionaries of 'hard words.' Then, Nathan Bailey, in his *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721), had aimed at a record of all English words, irrespective of their *vogue* or *repute*. Johnson purposely omitted 'many terms appropriated to particular occupations,' and thought not so much of the reader as of the writer and the purity of the language. His *Plan* clearly states his objects, and it is cleverly supplemented in Chesterfield's two papers in *The World*<sup>1</sup>. He set out to perform, singlehanded, for the English language what the French Academy, a century before, had undertaken for French<sup>2</sup>. It was to be 'a dictionary by which the pronunciation of our language may be fixed, and its attainment facilitated; by which its purity may be preserved, its use ascertained, and its duration lengthened.' So Johnson hoped; and Chesterfield was ready to acknowledge him as a dictator who would free the language from its anarchy. But,

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 100, 101.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the verses in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for April 1755, ending

And Johnson, well arm'd, like a hero of yore,  
Has beat forty French, and will beat forty more.

Cf., also, the review in *Maty's Journal Britannique*, 1755, xvii, p. 219: *Mr Johnson peut se glorifier...d'être en quelque sorte une Académie pour son île*. Adam Smith reviewed the *Dictionary* in the first number of *The Edinburgh Review* of 1755—4.

when he came to write the preface, he had found that 'no dictionary of a living tongue can ever be perfect, since, while, it is hastening to publication, some words are budding, and some falling away.' None the less, the mistaken hope gave the *Dictionary* its peculiar value. By aiming at fixing the language, he succeeded in giving the standard of reputable use.

Though there are many words in Bailey's dictionary which Johnson omitted, a hasty comparison will show that he added a large number. He held that the golden age of our language began with the reign of Elizabeth, and that the writers in the century before the restoration were 'the pure sources of genuine diction.' As his earliest authorities, he chose Sidney and Spenser. When he avowedly included obsolete words, they were to be found in wellknown authors, or appeared to deserve revival. 'Cant words,' as he called them, were occasionally admitted, because of their *vogue*; others were described as 'low.' But the most interesting departure from the rigid exclusiveness of an academic dictionary is his treatment of dialect. There is a much larger infusion of provincialisms than might have been expected. The great majority of these are Scottish, no doubt because five of his six amanuenses, as Boswell has proudly recorded, were 'natives of North Britain'; but he was also affectionately disposed to words with which he had been familiar in his native county. With all his care for current reputable use, he had too great respect for the native stock to ignore its humbler members, and his selection and description of these have a clear historical value. His main fear for the language was that it would be corrupted by French. It seemed to him to have been, since the restoration, 'deviating towards a Gallick structure and phraseology,' and to be threatening to 'reduce us to babble a dialect of France.' So he set himself to denounce 'the folly of naturalising useless foreigners to the injury of the natives.' It was no vain boast that the book was devoted to the honour of his country. 'We have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggles for our language.'

It appears from Spence's *Anecdotes* that Pope had discussed the plan of a dictionary, and had drawn up a list of authors, beginning with Hooker and Spenser, from whom words should be collected. The list is referred to in Johnson's *Plan*; and in terms which suggest a closer relationship than is now known to have existed. But there is nothing to show that Pope had favoured the inclusion of quotations. This was Johnson's most notable innovation in English lexicography. He had hoped that every quotation

would serve a further purpose than that of illustrating the use of a word; but he found, as he proceeded, that he had to abandon the idea of combining a dictionary with an anthology. The quotations were frequently from memory and are seldom accompanied with exact references; but, considering the slightness of the assistance which he received, they supply a remarkable proof of the range of his knowledge, and they have a different kind of interest from those in other dictionaries, which, based on more scientific principles, record the use of a word with no attention to the quality of the writer. But the chief worth of the *Dictionary* lies where it should. Johnson had a supreme talent for definition. When it is remembered that the definitions are his own, that he was the first to attempt a thorough distinction of the different meanings (such words as *come* and *go* being each subdivided into more than fifty sections), and that the highest praises he has received have been paid by his successors, the extent of his services to the survey of the language will readily be estimated. The few explanations in which he gave play to his prejudice or indulged his humour were only a remission of the continued exercise of his keen and muscular intellect. Occasionally, he obscured a simple meaning; and no better statement is to be found than in his preface, of the difficulties of defining the obvious. He had, like everyone in his century, little etymological knowledge to help him. But his common sense often kept him right in giving the original meaning of a word and distinguishing its later uses, where his successors, previously to the much later advance in philological science, by aiming at refinement introduced confusion and error<sup>1</sup>.

The publication of the *Dictionary* in eight years was a remarkable achievement of industry, and the more remarkable in that he had been doing much other work. Apart from his duties to his own *Rambler*, he held himself ready to assist his friends. He contributed a paper about once a fortnight, from March 1753, to Hawkesworth's *Adventurer*. He helped Lauder, unsuspectingly, with a preface and postscript to his Miltonic hoax, and dictated his confession (1750—1); and he wrote the dedication for Mrs Lennox's *Female Quixote* (1752) and *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1753). He contributed the life of Cheynel to *The Student* (1751), and the life of Cave to *The Gentleman's Magazine*

<sup>1</sup> There were four editions of the *Dictionary* in folio during Johnson's lifetime. The first of them, 'revised by the author,' appeared in 1773. But Bailey's continued to hold the market. It was the popular English dictionary of the eighteenth century.

(1754). He composed *Zachariah Williams's Account of an Attempt to ascertain the Longitude at Sea* (1755). And he furnished the *Dictionary* with a 'History of the English Language' and a 'Grammar of the English Tongue,' including a section on prosody, as well as with its noble preface. And all this had been accomplished 'amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.' He had so great a capacity for work, and when he had once started moved with so much ease, that he did not recognise his rapidity to be uncommon. The extreme concentration compelled periods of relaxation which he allowed to weigh on his conscience. He, too, was subject to the common delusion that his best was his normal. As he was, in all matters, a man of the most sensitive morality, it became a habit with him to be distressed at his idleness; and it has become a habit with us to speak of his constitutional indolence. He certainly had to make an effort to begin. But to the activity of the eight years from his thirty-eighth to his forty-sixth, it is not easy to find a parallel<sup>1</sup>.

The *Dictionary* has the accidental interest of having occasioned the letter to the earl of Chesterfield, which is sometimes said to have given the death-blow to literary patronage. Though always an object of curiosity, the letter was first made public by Boswell in 1790. In refusing to dedicate the *Dictionary*, Johnson adhered to his regular practice, from which only motives of business had suggested a departure. The *Plan* was a letter 'addressed' to Chesterfield. Only once had he dedicated a work of his own—*The Voyage to Abyssinia*, and that was dedicated in the person of the Birmingham bookseller. But, though he made a rule for himself, he did not condemn the custom. He accepted dedications, and he continued to supply other writers with theirs. He told Boswell that he 'believed he had dedicated to all the Royal family round.' He excelled in dedications.

His next scheme was a journal that should record the progress of European studies, and he planned it while the zest that came from completing the *Dictionary* concealed how far he had drawn on his energies. Such periodicals as *The Present State of the Republic of Letters* (1728—36) and *The History of the Works of the Learned* (1737—43) had now long ceased, after having shown, at most, the possibility of success; and, since 1749, their place had been taken by *The Monthly Review*, of which, in its early years,

<sup>1</sup> The second volume, L—Z, was begun on 8 April 1758, and the printing was finished by March 1755. The introductory matter to vol. I also belongs to these two years.

Johnson had no reason to think highly. He now intended an English periodical that would rival those of Le Clerc and Bayle. But this scheme for 'the Annals of Literature, foreign as well as domestic,' was to yield to an older project. In June 1756, he issued new *Proposals* for an edition of Shakespeare, and he hoped to have the work completed by the end of the following year. The long strain, however, had begun to tell. He had difficulty in facing any continuous work, and he suffered gravely from the mental depression to which he was always liable. He has described his unhappy condition in his Latin verses entitled *Γνώθι σεαυτὸν post Lexicon Anglicanum auctum et emendatum*, which give a more intimate account of his feelings than he ever allowed himself in the publicity of English; and stronger evidence is to be found in his prayers, and in the reports of his friends. It was now that he confirmed himself in the habit of seeking relief in company, and, by encouraging the calls of anyone who wished for his help, established his personal authority in literature. Only the need of money made him write, and none of his work at this time required long effort. He brought out an abridgment of his *Dictionary* (January 1756), but he probably had assistance in this mechanical labour. Having abandoned the idea of a critical periodical of his own, he contributed to the early numbers of Kit Smart's *Universal Visiter* (1756), and then undertook the control of *The Literary Magazine* (May 1756—7). Here, he made his famous defence of tea; and, here, he exposed the shallow optimism of Soame Jenyns's *Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*, in an essay which, written with the convincing ease that had come from the experience of much painful thought, is an unsurpassed example of his method and power in argument. Another piece of journalistic work, at this time, was the introductory column of Dodsley's evening paper, *The London Chronicle* (1 January 1757), which was to be distinguished from all other journals, probably on his advice, by its 'account of the labours and productions of the learned.' He also helped his friends with their books. He wrote a life of Sir Thomas Browne, with a criticism of Browne's style, for his own edition of *Christian Morals* (1756). With it may be grouped the later life of Ascham in the edition of Ascham's works nominally prepared by James Bennet (1761). The variety of his writings for some years after the completion of his *Dictionary* helps to explain how he found his memory unequal to producing a perfect catalogue of his works<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Johnson* (1785), p. 38.

His assistance was, once again, sought to give weight and dignity to a new periodical, and the starting of *The Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette* was the occasion of his second series of essays, *The Idler*. They began 15 April 1758, and appeared every Saturday till 5 April 1760. The fact that *The Idler* was not an independent publication, but merely a section of a journal, will account for most of the differences between it and the *Rambler*. The papers are much shorter and do not show the same sense of sole responsibility. In one respect, however, they have a clear superiority. Their lighter touch is better suited to portraiture. Dick Minim the critic, Johnson's only character that may still be said to live, is a perfect example of his art at its best; nor can there be any difference of opinion about the shorter sketches of Jack Whirlur and Tom Restless, or of Mr Sober, in which the author represented himself. That the characters should no longer bear Latin names indicates a wider change. The critical papers also show the growth of ease and confidence. There is an obvious interest in those on 'Hard Words,' 'Easy Writing' and 'The Sufficiency of the English Language.'

While *The Idler* was in progress, Johnson's mother died, and her death was the occasion both of his paper on the loss of a friend<sup>1</sup> and of his solemn novel on the choice of life, *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (April 1759)<sup>2</sup>. No work of his has been more frequently translated or is better known by name; but none has met with more contradictory judgments, or is a stricter test of the reader's capacity to appreciate the peculiar qualities of Johnson's thought and manner. There is little or no story, no crisis, no conclusion; there is little more than a succession of discussions and disquisitions on the limitations of life. *Rasselas* may be called the prose *Vanity of Human Wishes*; and it is the fullest, gravest and most intimate statement of his common theme.

It has been said that Addison would have written a novel, could he have cast the Coverly papers in a different form. Johnson proposed to write a novel, and produced an expanded essay. There are five 'oriental tales' in *The Rambler*, and three were yet to appear in *The Idler*. They suited his purpose in their vagueness of background and their free scope for didactic fancies. *Rasselas* is another of these tales, elaborated to enforce his lesson by a greater

<sup>1</sup> No. 41.

<sup>2</sup> In all the editions published during Johnson's lifetime the title was simply *The Prince of Abissinia, a Tale*. He had thought of calling it *The Choice of Life* (see his letter of 20 January 1759).

range of observation. The first requirement of the story was a happy valley. Older writers would have placed it in Arcadia; Johnson takes us to the same undiscovered country, but calls it Abyssinia. He had not forgotten his early translation. The name 'Rasselas' was suggested by it, and other instances of recollection are equally certain. There were 'impassable forests and inaccessible cliffs' in the real Abyssinia<sup>1</sup>, and why not a happy valley behind them? But one of the attractions of Lobo's narrative had been that the reader found in it no regions blessed with spontaneous fecundity or unceasing sunshine. Johnson knew, quite as well as the critics who stumble at local and ethnographical discrepancies, that there is no happy valley; but he asked its existence to be granted as a setting for a tale which would show that 'human life is every where a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed.' The gloom is heavy, but, to those who can appreciate Johnson, it is never depressing. He had cleared his mind of cant, and he wrote to give his readers the strength that comes from the honesty of looking straight at things as they are. He pursues his way relentlessly through the different conditions that seem to offer happiness openhanded, and works to a climax in the story of the astronomer; 'Few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practise his virtues, but all may suffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason.' This is one of the many passages which emphasise his perfect sincerity. The book ends in resignation to the futility of searching for happiness, and in resolution to pursue life as it is found. Stated in these words, the lesson may appear a commonplace. But so are the real things of human experience. And never was the lesson stated with more sympathetic knowledge, and enlivened with a greater wealth of aphoristic wisdom.

Meanwhile, the edition of Shakespeare was at a stand. Some of the plays—evidently, those in the first volume—had been printed by March 1758; but, during the next four years, there was no sign of progress. In addition to *The Idler* and *Rasselas* Johnson had been writing dedications, prefaces, introductions and reviews, engaging in unsuccessful controversy on the structure of the new bridge at Blackfriars, and helping to lay the Cock lane ghost. The discontent of his subscribers, roughly expressed in Churchill's *Ghost* (1762), at last roused him to complete his work;

<sup>1</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia* (1785), p. 105. For other recollections in the first chapter of *Rasselas* cf. *ibid.* pp. 97, 102, 204 and 259.

and the financial ease that had come with his pension of £300 (1762) gave him what time he needed. The edition was published, in eight volumes, in October 1765<sup>1</sup>.

There was nothing new in Johnson's methods as an editor. He aimed only at doing better what had been done already, and produced an edition of the old fashion at a time when the science of Shakespearean editing was about to make a distinct advance<sup>2</sup>. But he had qualifications sometimes wanting in editors with more painful habits or more ostentatious equipment—a good knowledge of Elizabethan English, and imperturbable common sense. Like almost every text of Shakespeare that had yet appeared, or was to appear till our own day, it was based on the text of the most recent edition. What he sent to the printer was Warburton's text revised. But he worked on the 'settled principle that the reading of the ancient books is probably true,' and learned to distrust conjecture. His collation was never methodical; his weak eyesight was a serious hindrance to an exacting task. But he restored many of the readings of the first folio, and, carrying on the system of combination that had been started by Pope, was the first to detect and admit many of the readings of the quartos. He produced a text which, with all its shortcomings, was nearer the originals than any that had yet appeared. Some of his emendations, which are always modest and occasionally minute, find an unsuspected place in our modern editions. Though his text has long been superseded, the advance of scholarship will never impair the value of his notes. It was a proud boast that not a single passage in the whole work had appeared to him corrupt which he had not endeavoured to restore, or obscure which he had not endeavoured to illustrate; and it did not go beyond the truth. No edition, within its limits, is a safer guide to Shakespeare's meaning. The student who searches the commentators for help in difficulties, soon learns to go straight to Johnson's note as the firm land of common sense in a sea of ingenious fancies. The same robust honesty gives the preface a place by itself among critical pronouncements on Shakespeare. He did not hesitate to state what he believed to be Shakespeare's faults. Yet Shakespeare remained to him the greatest of English authors, and the only author worthy to be ranked with Homer. He, also, vindicated the liberties of the

<sup>1</sup> New facts about Johnson's receipts for his edition of Shakespeare are given in the *Bi-Centenary Festival Reports*, pp. 29—32. From the original agreement with Tonson, it would appear that Johnson received a much larger sum than was stated by Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. v, p. 597.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ante*, vol. v, pp. 278 ff.

English stage. After conforming to the 'unities' in his own *Irene*, and then suggesting his doubts of them in *The Rambler*, he now proved that they are 'not essential to a just drama.' The guiding rule in his criticism was that 'there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature.' A generation later, the French 'romantics' found their case stated in his preface, and they did not better what they borrowed<sup>1</sup>.

Hereafter, Johnson did not, on his own initiative, undertake any other large work. 'Composition is, for the most part,' he said, 'an effort of slow diligence and steady perseverance, to which the mind is dragged by necessity or resolution.' His pension had removed the necessity, and, for the next twelve years, his best work lay in talk. In 1763, he met Boswell; in 1764, he founded with Reynolds 'The Club'—not known till long after as 'The Literary Club'; in 1765, he gained the friendship of the Thrales. Companionship and elegant comforts provided the relief that was still needed to his recurring depressions. He wrote little, but he engaged in personal kindnesses, and talked his best, and exerted an influence which spread far beyond the circle of his conversation. He was still, as at all times, ready to contribute to the publications of his friends, and even dictated the arguments in some of Boswell's law cases; but he did not undertake any writing that required resolution or has added to his fame. His four political tracts—*The False Alarm* (1770), *Falkland's Islands* (1771), *The Patriot* (1774) and *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775)—are known, so far as they are known, because he was their author. Since his early work on the debates in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, he had always taken a keen interest in politics. Most of his essays in *The Literary Magazine* had been on political topics. Towards the end of 1765, he had undertaken to supply 'single-speech' Hamilton with his views on questions that were being discussed in parliament, and had written for him, in November 1766, *Considerations on the Corn Laws*<sup>2</sup>. But now, he wrote as a pamphleteer. The most judicious of the four tracts is *Falkland's Islands*, which makes a just defence of the policy

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's examination of the 'unities' is translated word for word in Beyle, Henri, *Racine et Shakespeare* (1822). See *Johnson on Shakespeare* by Raleigh, Sir Walter (1908), and *Stendhal et l'Angleterre*, by Gunnell, Doris (1909).

<sup>2</sup> This was first published by Malone as an appendix to his edition of Hamilton's *Parliamentary Logic* (1808). Malone points out Boswell's error in deducing from the prayer entitled 'Engaging in Politicks with H—n' that Johnson was 'seized with a temporary fit of ambition' and thought of 'becoming a politician.' See, also, *Boswell*, ed. Hill, G. B. vol. 1, pp. 518—20.

towards Spain and is notable for its picture of the horrors of war and for its reference to Junius. The best thing in *The False Alarm*, his thoughts on the present discontents, is the satirical picture of the progress of a petition. In *Taxation no Tyranny*, his 'answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress,' he asks 'how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?'

The prejudice in *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* is of a different kind, and never displeasing. It is only the natural prejudice of John Bull as a tourist. He makes many acute observations which even the most perfervid Scot must have recognised to be just; but his impartiality is occasionally impeded by a want of knowledge which he himself was the first to admit. He had been conducted round Scotland by Boswell from August to November 1773, and the book—which was published in January 1775—is not so much a record of the ninety-four days of 'vigorous exertion' as a series of thoughts on a different civilisation. It had a different purpose from that of Pennant's *Tour in Scotland* (1771), which Johnson praised highly. He had taken the opportunity of enquiring into the authenticity of the poems of Ossian, and convinced himself that 'they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen.' This is the best known section of his book; but the reader may find more interest in the remarks on the superstitions of the Highlands, on American emigration and on the Scottish universities. In July and August 1774, he made a tour in north Wales with his friends the Thrales, and kept a diary which might have served as the groundwork of a companion volume to his *Scottish Journey*; but he did not make any use of it, and it remained in MS till 1816. The beauty of the Welsh scenery had greatly impressed him, and this diary must not be neglected in any estimate of his feeling for wild landscape. The fragmentary records of his tour in France with the Thrales in 1775 were left to be printed by Boswell. Johnson was content to pass the rest of his days in leisure, working only as the mood prompted, when, on Easter Eve 1777, a deputation of booksellers asked him to undertake, at the age of sixty-seven, what was to prove his masterpiece.

*The Lives of the Poets* arose out of a business venture. The London booksellers were anxious to drive out of the market an Edinburgh reprint of the English poets and to protect their own copyright; and, besides producing an edition superior in accuracy and elegance, they determined to add biographical prefaces by some writer of authority. The scheme took some time to mature, and

Percival Stockdale<sup>1</sup> had hopes of the editorship. But Johnson was given the first offer and at once accepted. Writing to Boswell, on 3 May 1777, he says he is engaged 'to write little Lives and little Prefaces, to a little edition of the English Poets.' The work proved so congenial that he wrote at greater length than he had intended; and, when the edition was completed, the prefaces were issued without the texts under the title *The Lives of the Poets* (1781). Their independent publication, and the title by which they are now known, were alike afterthoughts; in origin, *The Lives of the Poets* is only editorial matter. It is even more important to remember that this great body of critical opinion—perhaps the greatest in the English language—was written on invitation and in conformity with conditions controlled by others. When he found the complete series labelled 'Johnson's Poets,' he was moved to write on a scrap of paper which has happily been preserved: 'It is great impudence to put Johnson's Poets on the back of books which Johnson neither recommended nor revised.' Of the fifty-two poets, five, at most, were included on his suggestion. In the life of Watts, he says that the readers of the collection are to impute to him whatever pleasure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret and Yalden; but it would also appear from the letter to Boswell cited above that he 'persuaded the booksellers to insert something of Thomson.' There is no evidence that he advised any omission. For only one of the fifty-two lives was he indebted to another hand—the life of Young by Sir Herbert Croft. He included his early life of Savage, with insignificant changes, and worked up his article on Roscommon in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for May 1748. The other lives he now wrote specially for the booksellers, availing himself here and there of what he had written already, such as the 'Dissertation on Pope's Epitaphs' in *The Universal Visiter* (1756), and the character of Collins in Fawkes and Woty's *Poetical Calendar* (1763).

The original plan had evidently been to include 'all the English poets of reputation from Chaucer to the present day.' It is no matter for regret that this scheme was curtailed. The poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, besides affording him ample scope for expounding his views on poetry, possessed for him the personal interest which was always a stimulus to his criticism. But, even could he be shown to have recommended Cowley as the starting point, it would be an error to infer that this was the limit to his knowledge and appreciation. Such an

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs* (1809), vol. II, pp. 198—7.

inference would neglect his preface to Shakespeare, his work on the Elizabethans for the *Dictionary* and his statement in *The Idler*<sup>1</sup> that 'we consider the whole succession from Spenser to Pope as superior to any names which the Continent can boast.' Of the earlier writers, he had not the knowledge possessed by Thomas Warton and other of his friends. But he wrote on Ascham, and corresponded on the manuscripts of Sir Thomas More, and devoted to him a considerable section of the introductory matter of his *Dictionary*; and he was always alert to any investigation, whether in modern English, or Old English, or northern antiquities. His comprehensive knowledge of English literature may be described as beginning with the reign of Henry VIII. In an interview with George III, he was enjoined to add Spenser to *The Lives of the Poets*; and he would readily have complied, could he have obtained new material<sup>2</sup>.

In the earlier interview which Boswell has recorded, many years before *The Lives of the Poets* was thought of, George III proposed that Johnson should undertake the literary biography of his country. It was a happy courtesy, for, though there had been good lives of individual poets since Sprat's *Life of Cowley*, the collections that had yet appeared had shown that much remained to be accomplished, and Johnson was specially fitted to write the lives of authors. Even had he not said so, we should have suspected that the biographical part of literature was what he loved most. The best of these collections had been *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753), nominally by 'Mr Cibber' (Theophilus), but really by Robert Shiels<sup>3</sup>, *The Royal and Noble Authors* (1758), of Horace Walpole, which is a 'catalogue,' and the literary articles in the very unequal *Biographia Britannica*<sup>4</sup>. It was left to Johnson to impart a sustained excellence to this kind of writing, and, by engaging in what had not yet occupied an author of his authority, to raise it to a new level as an English literary form.

The most obvious features of *The Lives of the Poets* is the equipoise of biography and criticism. Johnson states the facts simply, but connects them with his impression of the writer, and,

<sup>1</sup> No. 91.

<sup>2</sup> This interview appears to have been unknown to Boswell. The authority for it is a sentence in the *Memoirs of Hannah More* (1834, vol. i, p. 174), and an obvious allusion in the conversation with John Nichols given towards the end of Boswell's *Life*.

<sup>3</sup> The evidence on the authorship is given in Sir Walter Raleigh's *Six Essays on Johnson* (1910), pp. 120—5, note.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson was asked to undertake the second edition of this work and regretted his refusal. See Boswell, ed. Hill, G. B. vol. iii, p. 174.

when he passes to the examination of poems, he is still thinking of ~~their~~ relation to the writer's personality. He finds the man behind the work. The truth is that he was much more interested in the man than in that part of him which is the author. Of 'mere poets,' he thought little; and, though he championed the dignity of authorship, he claimed for it no exclusive privileges, nor held that the poet was a man apart to be measured by standards inapplicable to other men. If the enduring freshness of *The Lives of the Poets* is due to any one quality more than to another, it is to Johnson's inexhaustible interest in the varieties of human nature. As detailed biographies, they have been superseded, though they remain our only authority for many facts and anecdotes, and include much that had been inaccessible. He made researches; but they were limited to his immediate needs. It is often easy to trace the sources of his information. He criticised Congreve's plays without having read them for many years, and he refused for a time to hear Lord Marchmont's recollections of Pope. Though, in general, he welcomed new details, his aim was to know enough to describe the man and to bring out his individuality in the estimate of his work.

The common result of this method in criticism is that the critic is at his best when he is in sympathy with the writer. Johnson meant to be scrupulously judicial; but he showed personal feelings. He disliked the acrimonious politics of Milton, the querulous sensitiveness of Swift and the timid foppery of Gray. This personal antipathy underlies his criticisms, though it is qualified, at times, even generously. Had Gray written often as in the *Elegy*, he says 'it had been vain to blame and useless to praise him'; and *Paradise Lost* 'is not the greatest of heroic poems only because it is not the first.' Of Dryden and Pope he wrote in friendship, and there exists no finer criticism of them. But no critic has been severer on Dryden's negligences, or spoken more ruthlessly of the *Essay on Man*.

The passage on *Lycidas* is generally regarded as an error of judgment which marks Johnson's limitations as a critic. With his usual courage, he stated a deliberate opinion. He gave his reasons—the artificiality of the pastoral convention, the confusion of the allegory with actual fact and sacred truth, and the absence of the feeling of real sorrow. But there is the further explanation that he was opposed to some recent tendencies in English poetry. That he had more than *Lycidas* in his mind is shown by the emphasis of his statement. The same ideas

reappear in his criticism of Collins and Gray. He objected to the habit of inverting the common order of words, and, on one occasion, cited Thomas Warton's 'evening gray'; he might also have cited 'mantle blue.' It was Warton who occasioned his extempore verses beginning—

Whereso'er I turn my view,  
All is strange, yet nothing new;

and Warton imitated, as well as edited, the early poems of Milton. Warton was one of many in whom he found faults which he traced to Milton as their original. In criticising *Lycidas*, he had in mind his own contemporaries. When the new tendencies had prevailed, he was said to have judged by a rigorous code of criticism. This code would have been difficult to reconcile with the preface to his edition of Shakespeare; with the praise given by him to Homer's heroes, that they are not described but develop themselves<sup>1</sup>; with his statement that 'real criticism' shows 'the beauty of thought as formed on the workings of the human heart'<sup>2</sup>; and with his condemnation of 'the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception'<sup>3</sup>.

His views on the matter of poetry are shown in his criticism of Gray's *Bard*: 'To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous.' The common growth of mother earth sufficed for him as for Wordsworth. The distinction which he draws between the *Elegy* and *The Bard* was that which ultimately divided Wordsworth and Coleridge. There was enough for him in life as he knew it. And there was a personal reason why, more than the other great writers of his century, he should tend to limit nature to human experience. The tumult in his mind was allowed no direct expression in his writings; but it made him look upon the world as the battle ground of thought, and passion, and will.

With the revision of *The Lives of the Poets*, Johnson's career as an author closed. In the three years of failing health which were left to him, he lived his accustomed life, honoured for the authority of his opinion, generous in his help to younger writers, and active in domestic benevolence. He revised Crabbe's *Village*, and dictated much to Boswell. Death removed some who had played a great part in his later life—Thrale, whose house at Streatham had been a second home, and two of the pensioners in

<sup>1</sup> Boswell, ed. Hill, G. B. vol. v, p. 79<sup>o</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. II, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Pope.*

his own house at Bolt-court, Levett and Mrs Williams. The tribute to Levett, noble in its restrained emotion, is the most tender of his poems. The sadness of loss was embittered by Mrs Thrale's marriage to Piozzi and the irreparable break in the long and happy friendship. He had so far recovered from a paralytic seizure as to be able, at the close of 1783, to found the Essex-Head club. By its ease of access, the old man sought to supply the need of new company. He dined at The Club, for the last time, in June 1784. Next month, he set out for his native city, and returned by Birmingham and Oxford, the cities of his youth. His health had not found any relief, and, when he reached London in November, was rapidly declining. He died 13 December, and, on the 20th, was buried in Westminster abbey. Shortly before his death, he had destroyed his papers.

His long career had been uniform in its aim and methods, and the distinctions between his earlier and later writings are those which come from experience and confidence. The author of the preface to *A Voyage to Abyssinia* is unmistakably the author of *The Rambler* and *The Lives of the Poets*, with the same tastes and habits of thought, but younger, with a shorter reach and less precision in his skill. There had been no discipleship, and no time of searching where his strength lay; and no new influences had modified his purpose. The changes to be found in his work of forty-five years are those of a natural and undisturbed development, so steady that its stages cannot be minutely marked by us, and were probably imperceptible to himself. As he grew older, he related all art more and more to life. Though careful to give his thoughts their best expression, and severe on improprieties in others, he became impatient of mere proficiency in technique; and, though a scholar, he recognised the insufficiency of scholarship and the barrenness of academic pursuits. He had the 'purposes of life' ever and increasingly before him, and his criticisms of the English poets are the richest of his works in worldly wisdom.

At the same time, his style became more easy. The Latin element is at its greatest in *The Rambler*. He was then engaged on his *Dictionary*. But he always tended to use long words most when he wrote in haste; and his revision was towards simplicity<sup>1</sup>. He used them in conversation, where alone he allowed himself the liberty of a daring coinage. They were in no sense an

<sup>1</sup> See, in addition to the alterations in *The Rambler*, the corrections in *The Lives of the Poets* as given in Boswell's lists.

embroidery, but part of the very texture of his thought. 'Difference of thoughts,' he said, 'will produce difference of language. He that thinks with more extent than another will want words of larger meaning; he that thinks with subtlety will seek for terms of more nice discrimination<sup>1</sup>.' As we read him and accustom our minds to move with his, we cease to notice the diction. The strength of his thought carries the weight of his words. His meaning is never mistaken, though it may not be fully grasped at a glance; for he puts much in small compass, and the precision of his language requires careful reading for its just appreciation. 'Familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious'; 'vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage'—could the thought be put more pointedly, or adequately, or shortly? When Latin diction cannot be changed without loss, or without affecting the tenor of the thought, it has made good its right. His humour and irony found an aid in the dignified phraseology. But he also used simple words. Wit is 'that which he that never found it wonders how he missed'; 'what he does best he soon ceases to do'; 'a rage for saying something when there is nothing to be said'—these, also, are typical of his style. The letter to Chesterfield reaches its climax in the homeliest of English: 'till I am known, and do not want it.'

His parodists have been peculiarly unsuccessful. We lose their meaning in a jumble of pedantries; and we do not lose Johnson's. They inflate their phraseology; but Johnson is not tumid. And they forget that his balance is a balance of thought. His own explanation still holds good: 'the imitators of my style have not hit it. Miss Aikin has done it the best; for she has imitated the sentiment as well as the diction.' This was said in 1777. But better than Miss Aikin's essay 'On Romances'<sup>2</sup> in the style of *The Rambler*, and the best of all the parodies, is *A Criticism on the Elegy written in a Country Church-yard* (1783), composed by John Young, the versatile professor of Greek at Glasgow, and designed as a continuation of *The Life of Gray*. The long list of his serious imitators begins with Hawkesworth and extends to Jeffrey<sup>3</sup>, who started by training himself in the school of the periodical essayists. Others, who did not take him as a model, profited by the example of a style in which nothing is negligent and nothing superfluous. He was the dominating influence in

<sup>1</sup> *Idler*, no. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose*, by J. Aikin and A. L. Aikin (Mrs Barbauld), 1778.

<sup>3</sup> See Cockburn, *Life of Jeffrey*, vol. i, pp. 81 etc.

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English prose throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. The lesson of discipline required to be taught, and it was learned from him by many whose best work shows no traces of his manner.

His death, says Murphy, 'kept the public mind in agitation beyond all former example. No literary character ever excited so much attention.' Collections of stories about him had begun to appear in his lifetime, and now his friends competed in serious biography. When Mrs Piozzi wrote her account, she had heard of nine others already written or in preparation. Her *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson* (1786) has a place by itself. It preserves much that would have been lost; but its importance lies chiefly in its picture of Johnson's character, and in its illustration of the qualities by which he was attracted. She writes with amiable pride in the ties that bound him to the hospitality of Streatham, and with an honest effort to rise above their quarrel. If her detractors can find evidence of artfulness, no one can deny the clearness of her vision; and, if, at times, her little vanities prevented her from seeing the true bearing of Johnson's remarks, she must, at least, be admitted to have been happy in the selection of what she has recorded. There is no work of the same size as her *Anecdotes* that gives a better portrait of Johnson. In strong contrast is the *Life* (1787) by Sir John Hawkins. It is the solid book of an 'unclubbable' magistrate and antiquary, who has much knowledge and little intuition. He had known Johnson for over forty years and, on many points, is our chief authority. Much of the value of his book lies in the lengthy digressions on contemporary literature. His lack of sympathy made him unsuited for biography; but we are under a debt to him for the facts which he threw together.

The merits of Mrs Piozzi and Hawkins were united and augmented by Boswell. He had been collecting material since his first interview in 1763. He had told Johnson his purpose by 1772, and he had spoken definitely of his *Life* in a letter of 1775. After Johnson's death, he set to work in earnest and spared himself no trouble.

'You cannot imagine,' he wrote in 1789, 'what labour, what perplexity, what vexation I have endured in arranging a prodigious multiplicity of materials, in supplying omissions, in searching for papers buried in different masses, and all this besides the exertion of composing and polishing: many a time have I thought of giving it up.'

But he was confident in the result. It was to be not merely the best biography of Johnson, but the best biography ever written.

'I am absolutely certain,' he said, 'that my mode of biography, which gives not only a *History* of Johnson's *visible* progress through the world, and of his publications, but a *view* of his mind in his letters and conversations, is the most perfect that can be conceived, and will be more of a Life than any work that has ever yet appeared.'

When the book at last came out, in May 1791, the same confidence was expressed in the opening paragraphs. There, he admits that the idea of interspersing letters had been taken from Mason's life of Gray. He had made a careful study of the art of biography; and the *Anecdotes* of Mrs Piozzi, which had shown the necessity of a careful handling of intimate material, and the facts of Hawkins, which had proved the inadequacy of simple narrative, had reassured him that he was engaged on the real life of his friend.

Johnson owes much to Boswell; but it was Johnson who gave us Boswell. His life is the story of failure turned to success by an irresistible devotion. He had always been attracted by whatever won the public attention, partly from scientific curiosity, as when he visited Mrs Rudd, and partly with a view to his own advancement. In the first of his letters, he says that Hume 'is a very proper person for a young man to cultivate an acquaintance with.' He comes to know Wilkes, but doubts 'if it would be proper to keep a correspondence with a gentleman in his present capacity.' The chief pleasure that he foresaw in his continental tour was his meeting with Voltaire and Rousseau. Then, he proceeded to Corsica and became the friend and enthusiastic champion of Paoli. Having received a communication on Corsican affairs from the earl of Chatham, he asks: 'Could your lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter?' Again, he is found thinking of a life of lord Kames and satisfying himself that 'he has eminence enough to merit this.' There was cause for the sturdy laird of Auchinleck to complain, according to Sir Walter Scott's anecdote, that his irresponsible son was always pinning himself to the tail of somebody or other. But, of all his heroes, Johnson alone brought out the best qualities in his volatile character, and steadied him to the worthy use of his rare gifts. When Johnson is absent, his writings possess no remarkable merit, though they have always the interest of being the pellucid expression of his singular personality. The *Life* is the devoted and flawless recognition of an influence which he knew that his nature had required.

Born at Edinburgh in 1740, the son of a Scottish advocate who

took his title as a judge from his ancient estate of Auchinleck in Ayrshire, Boswell reluctantly adopted the family profession of law, and, after studying at Edinburgh, Glasgow and Utrecht, was called to the Scottish bar in 1766. His heart was never in a legal career, and, to the last, he had a fond belief in sudden and splendid success in literature or politics. His earliest work appeared in *The Scots Magazine*, but has not been identified. He wrote much verse and published *An Elegy on the death of an amiable young lady* (1761), *An Ode to Tragedy*, dedicated to himself (1761), and *The Cub at Newmarket*, a humorous description of his experiences as the guest of the Jockey club (1762). Several of his earliest pieces are printed in *A Collection of Original Poems, by the Rev. Mr Blacklock and other Scotch Gentlemen* (1760—2), the second volume of which he edited<sup>1</sup>. He frequented the literary society of Edinburgh, founded the jovial 'Soaping Club' and engaged in regular correspondence with his friends. The *Letters between the Hon. Andrew Erskine and James Boswell Esq.*, in which, also, there is much verse, he published in 1763. 'They have made ourselves laugh,' says the advertisement; 'we hope they will have the same effect upon other people.' They were hardly worth publishing, though we should be sorry now not to have them. In the description of a long series of daydreams, given with the characteristic vanity which is always saved by its frankness, he says:

I am thinking of the perfect knowledge which I shall acquire of men and manners, of the intimacies which I shall have the honour to form with the learned and ingenious in every science, and of the many amusing literary anecdotes which I shall pick up.

This was published, from Flexney's shop in Holborn, in the very month that he met Johnson in Davies's parlour. Shortly before this, he had brought out, with Erskine and George Dempster, his two associates in much of his early work, the rare *Critical Strictures* on Mallet's *Elvira*. He returned to Edinburgh from his continental travels in 1766, and, being admitted to the bar in the midst of the excitement about the Douglas cause, found in it material for *Dorando* (June 1767), which recounts the points at issue under a Spanish disguise, and appeared immediately before the thirteen Scottish judges, by a majority of one, arrived at a decision contrary to his wishes. The little story went into three

<sup>1</sup> The manuscripts of many of Boswell's poems written between 1760 and 1768, several of them unprinted, are in the Bodleian library—MS Douce 193. The collection includes a 'Plan of a Volume of Poems to be published for me by Becket and Dehorde.'

editions within a fortnight, but it now disappoints the hopes excited by its rarity. As the case was sent up to the House of Lords, where the decision was ultimately reversed, Boswell continued to write about it and brought out the more serious *Essence of the Douglas Cause* (November 1767). He took an energetic part in the riotous controversy concerning the Edinburgh stage and supplied the prologue for the opening of the first licensed theatre in Scotland<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, he was engaged on his Corsican experiences. *An Account of Corsica* had been read by Lord Hailes in manuscript in June 1767, and was issued in March 1768. It is Boswell's first considerable book, and, indeed, his only book, apart from those concerned with Johnson, that had a chance of being remembered on its merits. It won what he calls 'amazing celebrity'; he could boast that he was 'really the great man now.' His head was full of Corsica and was not to be emptied of it, even on Johnson's advice. He made a collection of twenty letters by himself and others, and published them under the title *British Essays in favour of the Brave Corsicans* (January 1769); and, in the following September, he appeared at the Shakespeare festival at Stratford in the dress of an armed Corsican chief and recited a poem that 'preserved the true Corsican character.' A description of the proceedings, an account of himself, and the poem were immediately contributed by him to *The London Magazine*. Two months later, he married, and then tried to settle to his legal practice. From this time, the influence of Johnson, already evident in *An Account of Corsica*, grew steadily stronger. He was not satisfied with Edinburgh after the splendour of London. 'The unpleasing tone, the rude familiarity, the barren conversation,' he complains, 'really hurt my feelings.' But he had to content himself with lengthy visits to London in vacation, which were the more indispensable when Johnson had procured his election to The Club, and he had become a proprietor of *The London Magazine*. He contributed to it, monthly, a series of seventy periodical essays called *The Hypochondriack* (1777—83), for which he found much material in himself. There is also much in them that was inspired by the dominating friendship. They take *The Rambler* as their model, and are the most Johnsonian of his writings. After the death of his father and his own

<sup>1</sup> The prologue was printed in *The Scots Magazine* for November 1767; see, also, *The European Magazine* for May 1791 and Dibdin, J. C., *Annals of the Edinburgh Stage* (1888), pp. 148—8, and 498. The *Songs in the Justiciary Opera*, privately printed for Alexander Boswell in 1816, belong to this time.

succession to Auchinleck, in 1782, he turned to politics, and carried out his ambition of becoming a member of the English bar, but to no purpose. He stood for parliament, and published two letters 'to the people of Scotland'; one, *On the Present State of the Nation* (1783), and the other, *On the Alarming Attempt to infringe the Articles of the Union* (1785). All he obtained was the recordership of Carlisle, which he soon resigned. In his last years, which were saddened by the loss of his wife and troubled with financial difficulties, he is still found hoping that practice may come at any time and expecting 'a capital prize.' He confesses that he no longer lives with a view to have surprising incidents, though he is still desirous that his life 'should tell.' But he begins to waken from the long delusion and, in a melancholy moment, admits: 'I certainly am constitutionally unfit for any employment.' He was then on the point of achievement. His life was to tell better than he knew, and in another way than he had hoped. His friendship for Johnson was helping him in these years to do what he was unable to do for himself. Without Johnson, he relapses to the level of his early verse in *No Abolition of Slavery; or the Universal Empire of Love* (April 1791)<sup>1</sup>. And, when the effort of producing the great work is over, there remains only the record of steady decline, varied by new schemes of matrimony, and cheered by large sales and the preparation of new editions. He died in London, 19 May 1795. From 1758 to within a few weeks of his death, he had corresponded regularly with William Johnson Temple, a fellow student in the Greek class at Edinburgh who became vicar of St Gluvias in Cornwall; and these letters, which had been sold by a hawker at Boulogne and were rescued to be published in 1857, give us his real autobiography<sup>2</sup>. They tell us much more than the many descriptions of himself, from his *Ode to Tragedy* to the 'Memoirs' in the *European Magazine* of 1791<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this rare piece is now in the Bodleian library. It was for long doubtful if it had been published, but a review with copious extracts had been given in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for April 1791.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell thought of an autobiography. 'My journal,' he says, 'will afford materials for a very curious narrative' (letter to Temple, 22 May 1789). The first record of a journal is in his letter to Temple of 16 December 1758. The journal was destroyed; but a portfolio of papers, each inscribed 'Boswelliana,' escaped. They are now in the possession of the marquess of Crewe, and were edited by Charles Rogers for the Grampian club in 1874. Boswell thought also of editions of Johnson's poems, Walton's *Lives*, and the autobiography of Sir Robert Sibbald; a work maintaining the merit of Addison's poetry; histories of Sweden, James IV, and the '45; a life of Thomas Buddiman; and an account of the Isle of Man. These, and others, are mentioned in the *Life of Johnson*; and yet other projects are mentioned elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> If he did not write these 'Memoirs,' he certainly supplied their material.

If they show why his descendants decided on a holocaust of his papers, they also explain the attraction which he exerted on those who took the trouble to try to understand him.

But, if Boswell without Johnson would have been forgotten, it was his own talent that gave the *Life* its surpassing excellence. Whenever he writes of Johnson, he succeeds in giving the impression that he saw things as they were, and not through the spectacles of his own personality. He never tried to conceal the part that he played; and yet, despite his vanities, and they were many, he knew how to make his readers think that they are looking at the facts for themselves. The very freedom from self-consciousness which was no help to his career was a great part of the secret of his skill in description. It also provided him with material denied to less sympathetic natures. 'No man,' he said, 'has been more successful in making acquaintance easily than I have been. I even bring people quickly on to a degree of cordiality.' Johnson, too, tells us that 'Mr Boswell's frankness and gaiety made every body communicative.' He never tired of arranging new situations, in order to see what they would bring forth; and his interpretations of what he found are strong testimony to his insight into character and to his judgment. Minute as his observations are, he never offers a meaningless detail. It is easy to understand why Johnson made him postpone the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, which was intended as a supplement to his own *Journey*. He had given 'notions rather than facts'; but Boswell had contrived to make the facts give Johnson. The reproduction of his sayings and experiences was too minute to be published during his lifetime, and was more decently delayed till the year after his death<sup>1</sup>. The *Life* does not surpass the *Journal* in the sense of actuality; but it is a greater achievement. He had met Johnson only on some two hundred and seventy days, scattered over twenty-one years, and his material had to be gathered from many sources. He selects and arranges; he places his facts in the light and perspective that will create the situation; and Johnson lives in his pages. And he had the gift of the perfect style for his kind of biography—a style of no marked individuality, but easy, clear and flexible, which does its duty without attracting attention, and requires to be examined to have its excellence recognised.

<sup>1</sup> The *Journal* was revised by Malone while it was going through the press. Malone also revised the *Life*, and, on Boswell's death, completed the preparation of the third and final edition.

## CHAPTER IX

### OLIVER GOLDSMITH

‘No man,’ wrote that authoritative but ‘autocratic biographer, John Forster, ‘ever put so much of himself into his books as Goldsmith, from the beginning to the very end of his career.’ To many authors, this saying is only partly applicable; but it is entirely applicable to the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. His life and his works are intimately connected. They accompany and interpret each other in such a way as to make them practically inseparable; and it is, therefore, appropriate, as well as convenient, to treat them, so to speak, in the piece, rather than to attempt any distribution of the subject into divisions and sub-divisions of history and criticism.

Concerning Goldsmith's early years, there is much that is obscure, or that, in any case, cannot be accepted without rigorous investigation. He left his native island when he was three-and-twenty, and never returned to it. Those who, like Glover and Cooke, wrote accounts of him shortly after his death, were the humbler associates of his later and more famous years, while the professedly authentic ‘Memoir’ drawn up under the nominal superintendence of bishop Percy, and the much quoted letter of Annesley Strean in Mangin's *Essay on Light Reading*, did not see the light until the first decade of the nineteenth century, when Goldsmith had long been dead. It follows that much of the information thus collected after date must have been imperfect and contradictory, often extracted from persons more familiar with his obscure beginnings than with his later eminence, and, possibly, in answer to those unsatisfactory leading questions which usually elicit not so much the truth as what the querist wishes to establish.

Goldsmith was born on 10 November 1728; and it is usually held that the place of his nativity was Pallas, or Pallasmore, a village near Ballymahon, in the county of Longford, Ireland.

But it has also been plausibly contended, though actual proof is not forthcoming, that his true birthplace was Smith-Hill house, Elphin, Roscommon, the residence of his mother's father, Oliver Jones, a clergyman and master of the Elphin diocesan school. His own father, Charles Goldsmith, was, likewise, a clergyman of the established church. When Oliver came into the world, Charles Goldsmith was acting as assistant to an uncle whose name was Green, the rector of Kilkenny West, and eking out a scanty subsistence by farming a few fields. In 1730, Green died; and Charles Goldsmith, succeeding to the vacant rectorate, transferred his residence to the hamlet of Lissoy, in Westmeath, a little to the right of the road from Ballymahon to Athlone. At this time, he had five children, two sons and three daughters, Oliver being the fifth child and second son. As already stated, the accounts of his earliest years are contradictory. By some, he was regarded as thick-witted and sullen; to others, he seemed alert and intelligent. That he was an adept at all boyish sports is admitted; and it is also recorded that he scribbled verses early. His first notable instructor was the village schoolmaster, Thomas, or 'Paddy,' Byrne, who had been a quartermaster in queen Anne's wars. Byrne was also a local rimer, and had even composed an Irish version of the *Georgics*. His endless stories of his continental adventures, and his inexhaustible legends of ghosts and banshees, held his pupils spellbound; and, by Goldsmith's family, were, later, made responsible for much of 'that wandering and unsettled turn which so much appeared in his future life.' When Goldsmith was seven or eight, he was attacked by confluent smallpox, which scarred him terribly and probably added not a little to the 'exquisite sensibility of contempt' with which he seems to have been born. With this, at all events, is connected one of the two most-repeated anecdotes of his childhood. A ne'er-do-well relation asked him heartlessly when he meant to grow handsome, to which, after an awkward silence, he replied, 'I mean to get better, sir, when you do.' The other story also illustrates an unexpected gift of repartee. At a party in his uncle's house, during the pause between two country-dances, little Oliver capered out, and executed an extempore hornpipe. His deeply-pitted face and ungainly figure caused much amusement; and the fiddler, a lad named Cumming, called out '*Æsop*.' To which the dancer promptly answered:

Heralds, proclaim aloud! all saying,  
See *Æsop* dancing, and his *Monkey* playing,

at once transferring the laugh to his side. Whether improvised or remembered, the retort certainly shows intellectual alacrity.

From Byrne, Goldsmith passed to the school at Elphin, of which his grandfather had been master; thence to Athlone, and, finally, to Edgeworthstown, where his preceptor, Patrick Hughes, seems to have understood him better than his previous instructors. Hughes penetrated his superficial obtuseness, recognised his exceptionally sensitive temperament, and contrived, at any rate, to think better of him than some of his playmates who only succeeded in growing up blockheads. There were traditions at Edgeworthstown of his studies—his fondness for Ovid and Horace, his hatred of Cicero and his delight in Livy and Tacitus; of his prowess in boyish sports and the occasional robbing of orchards. It is to the close of his Edgeworthstown experiences that belongs one of the most popular of the incidents which exemplify the connection between his life and his work. Returning to school at the end of his last holiday, full of the youthful pride begotten of a borrowed mount and a guinea in his pocket, he lingered on his road, with the intention of putting up, like a gentleman, at some roadside inn. Night fell, and he found himself at Ardagh, where, with much importance, he enquired of a passer-by for 'the best house' (hostelry) in the neighbourhood. The person thus appealed to, a local wag named Cornelius Kelly, formerly fencing master to the marquis of Granby, amused by his boyish swagger, gravely directed him to the residence of the squire of the place, Mr Featherston. Hither Goldsmith straightway repaired, ordered supper, invited his host, according to custom, to drink with him, and, being by that humourist fooled to the top of his bent, retired to rest, after giving particular directions as to the preparation of a hot cake for his breakfast. Not until his departure next morning was it disclosed that he had been entertained in a private house. The story is too good to question; and accepted, as it has always been, supplies a conclusive answer to those after-critics of *She Stoops to Conquer* who regarded the central idea of that comedy—the mistaking of a gentleman's residence for an inn—as unjustifiably farfetched. Here, in Goldsmith's own life, was the proof of its probability.

At this date, he must have been between fourteen and fifteen; and, whatever his ability, it seems to have been decided that he should follow his elder brother Henry to Trinity college, Dublin, though not with the same advantages. Henry Goldsmith, who

was five or six years his brother's senior, had gone as a pensioner and obtained a scholarship. For Oliver, this was impracticable. His father, a poor man, had, from family pride, further crippled himself by undertaking to portion his second daughter, Catherine, who had clandestinely married the son of a rich neighbour. In these circumstances, nothing was open to Goldsmith but to obtain his university education as a poor scholar, a semi-menial condition which, to one already morbidly sensitive, could not fail to be distasteful. For a long time, he fought doggedly against his fate; but, at length, yielding to the persuasions of a friendly uncle Contarine, who had himself gone through the same ordeal, he was admitted to Trinity college as a sizar on 11 June 1744, taking up his abode in one of the garrets of what was then the eastern side of Parliament square.

The academic career thus inauspiciously begun was not worshipful. From the outset, he was dispirited and disappointed, and, consequently, without energy or enthusiasm. Moreover, he was unfortunate in his tutor, a clergyman named Theaker Wilder, who, though his bad qualities may have been exaggerated, was certainly harsh and unsympathetic. His *forte*, too, was mathematics, which Goldsmith, like Swift, like Gray, like Johnson, detested as cordially as he detested the arid logic of 'Dutch Burgersdyck' and Polish Smiglesius. According to Stubbs's *History of the University of Dublin*,

Oliver Goldsmith is recorded on one or two occasions as being remarkably diligent at Morning Lecture; again, as cautioned for bad answering at Morning and Greek Lectures; and finally, as put down into the next class for neglect of his studies.

To this, he added other enormities. He was noted, as was Johnson at Oxford, for much 'lounging about the college gate'; and for his skill on that solace to melancholy and *laborum dulce lenimen*, the German flute, of which, as readily as his own 'Man in Black,' he had apparently mastered the 'Ambusheer.' He became involved in various scrapes, notably a college riot, including that ducking of a bailiff afterwards referred to in the first version of *The Double Transformation*, on which occasion he was publicly admonished *quod seditioni favisset et tumultuantibus opem tulisset*. Recovering a little from the stigma of this disgrace by gaining a small (Smythe) exhibition, he was imprudent enough to celebrate his success by a mixed entertainment, in what only by courtesy could be called his 'apartments.' On these festivities, the exasperated Wilder made irruption, knocking down the

unfortunate host, who, after forthwith selling his books, ran away, vaguely bound, as on subsequent occasions, for America. But a reconciliation with his tutor was patched up by Oliver's brother Henry; and he returned to his college to enjoy the half-peace of the half-pardoned. His father was now dead; and he was miserably poor. He managed, however, to take his B.A. degree on 27 February 1749, and quitted the university without regret, leaving behind him a scratched signature on a window pane (still preserved), an old lexicon scored with 'promises to pay' and a reputation for supplementing his scanty means by the ballads (unluckily *not* preserved) which he was accustomed to write and afterwards sell for five shillings a head at the Reindeer in Mountrath court, stealing out at nightfall—so runs the tradition—to 'snatch the fearful joy' of hearing them sung. It must have been the memory of these things which, years after, at Sir William Chambers's, made him fling down his cards, and rush hurriedly into the street to succour a poor ballad-woman, who had apparently, like Rubini, *les larmes dans la voix*.

What was to happen next? For a Goldsmith of the Goldsmiths, there was no career but the church; and he was too young to be ordained. Thereupon ensued an easy, irresponsible time, which the new B.A. spent very much to his own satisfaction. He was supposed to be qualifying for orders; but he had never any great leaning that way. 'To be obliged to wear a long wig, when he liked a short one, or a black coat, when he generally dressed in brown,' observes one of his characters in *The Citizen of the World*, was 'a restraint upon his liberty.' Hence, as his biographer Prior sagaciously says, 'there is reason to believe that at this time he followed no systematic plan of study.' On the contrary, he passed his time wandering, like Addison's Will Wimble, from one relative to another, fishing and otter-hunting in the isleted river Inny, playing the flute to his cousin Jane Cantarine's harpsichord, or presiding at the 'free and easys' held periodically at George Conway's inn at Ballymahon, where, for the benefit of posterity, he doubtless made acquaintance with Jack Slang the horse-doctor, Dick Muggins the exciseman and that other genteel and punctilious humourist who never 'danced his bear' except to Arne's 'Water parted' or the minuet in Handel's *Ariadne*. But these 'violent delights' could have only one sequel. When, in 1751, he presented himself to Dr Synge, bishop of Elphin, for ordination, he was rejected. Whether his college reputation had preceded him; whether, as on a later occasion, he was found 'not qualified,' or

whether (as legend has it) he pushed his aversion from clerical costume so far as to appear in flaming scarlet smallclothes—these questions are still debated. That another calling must be chosen was the only certain outcome of this mishap. He first turned to the next refuge of lettered unemployment, tuition. Having, in this way, accumulated some thirty pounds, he bought a horse, and once more started for America. Before six weeks were over, he had returned penniless, on an animal only fit for the knacker's yard, and seemed naïvely surprised that his friends were not rejoiced to see him. Law was next thought of; and, to this end, his uncle Contarine equipped him with fifty pounds. But he was cozened by a sharper on his way to London, and once more came back—in bitter self-abasement. In 1752, his longsuffering uncle for the last time fitted him out, this time to study physic at Edinburgh, which place, wonderful to relate, he safely reached. But he never saw Ireland, or his kind relative, again.

After two years' stay in the Scottish capital, where more memories survive of his social success than of his studies, he took his departure for Leyden, nominally to substitute the lectures of Albinus for the lectures of Monro. At Leyden, he arrived in 1754, not without some picturesque and, possibly, romanced adventures related in a letter to Contarine. The names of Gaubius and other Batavian professors figure glibly and sonorously in his future pages; but that he had much experimental knowledge of their instruction is doubtful. His name is not enrolled as a 'Stud. Litt.' in the Album Academicum of Leyden university, nor is it known where he received that 'commission to slay' which justified him in signing himself 'M.B.' It was certainly not at Padua<sup>1</sup>; and enquiries at Leyden and Louvain were made by Prior without success. But the Louvain records were destroyed in the revolutionary wars. That, however, his stay at Leyden was neither prosperous nor prolonged is plain. He fell again among thieves; and, finally, like Holberg, or that earlier 'Peregrine of Odcombe,' Thomas Coryat of the *Crudities*, set out to make the grand tour on foot. '*Haud inexpertus loquor*,' he wrote, later, in praising this mode of locomotion; though, on second thoughts, he suppressed the quotation as an undignified admission. He went, first, to Flanders; then passed to France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, supporting himself, much as George Primrose does in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, by playing the flute, and by occasional disputations at convents or universities. 'Sir,' said Boswell to

<sup>1</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 21 July 1894.

Johnson (who seems to have sustained the pun without blenching), 'he *disputed* his passage through Europe.' At some period of his wanderings he must have sketched a part of *The Traveller*, specimens of which he sent from Switzerland to his brother Henry. After a year's wandering, he landed at Dover on 1 February 1756, 'his whole stock of cash,' says an early biographer, 'amounting to no more than a few half-pence.' By this time, he was seven-and-twenty.

His vocation was still as visionary as were his means of subsistence. He is supposed to have tried strolling, and was certainly anxious to play 'Scrub' in later years. For a season, he was an apothecary's assistant on Fish street hill. Hence, with some assistance from an Edinburgh friend, Dr Sleigh, he 'proceeded' a poor physician in the Bankside, Southwark—the region afterwards remembered in *An Elegy on Mrs Mary Blaize*. He is next found as corrector of the press to Richardson, at Salisbury court. Then, drifting insensibly towards literature, to which he seems never to have intentionally shaped his course, he is (again like his own George Primrose) an usher at the 'classical Academy' of Dr Milner of Peckham. He had already submitted a manuscript tragedy to the author of *Clarissa*; and, at Milner's table, he encountered the bookseller Ralph Griffiths, proprietor of *The Monthly Review*. Struck by some remark on the part of Milner's latest assistant, and seeking for new blood to aid him in his campaign against Hamilton's *Critical Review*, Griffiths asked Goldsmith whether he could furnish some 'specimens of criticism.' An arrangement followed under which, released from the drudgery of Peckham, Goldsmith was to receive, with bed and board, a salary which Percy calls 'handsome,' Prior 'adequate' and Forster 'small.' For this, he was to labour daily from nine till two (or later) on copy-of-all-work for his master's magazine.

This, in effect, was Goldsmith's turning-point; and he had reached it by accident rather than design. Divinity, law, physic—he had tried them all; but, at letters, he had never aimed. With his duties 'at the Sign of the Dunciad,' in Paternoster row, began his definite bondage to the '*antiqua Mater* of Grub Street'; and we may pause for a moment to examine his qualifications for his difficult career. They were more considerable than one would imagine from his vagrant, aimless past. He was a fair classical scholar, more advanced than might be supposed from his own modest admission to Malone, that he could 'turn an ode of Horace into English better than any of them'; and, as that sound critic

and Goldsmithian, the late Sidney Irwin, remarked, it is not necessary to make him responsible for the graceless Greek of Mr Ephraim Jenkinson. In English poetry, he was far seen, especially in Dryden, Swift, Prior, Johnson, Pope and Gay. He had a good knowledge of Shakespeare; and was familiar with the comic dramatists, particularly his compatriot Farquhar. French he had acquired before he left Ireland, and he had closely studied Molière, La Fontaine and the different collections of *ana*. For Voltaire, he had a sincere admiration; and, whether he actually met him abroad or not, it is probable his own native style, clear and perspicuous as it was from the first, had been developed and perfected by the example of the wonderful writer by whom the adjective was regarded as the enemy of the noun. Finally, he had enjoyed considerable experience of humanity, though mostly in the rough; and, albeit his standpoint as a pedestrian had, of necessity, limited his horizon, he had 'observed the face' of the countries through which he had travelled, making his own deductions. On what he had seen, he had reflected, and, when he sat down to the 'desk's dead wood' in Paternoster row, his initial equipment as a critic, apart from his individual genius, must have been superior, in variety and extent, at all events, to that of most of the literary gentlemen, not exclusively hacks, who did Griffiths's notices in *The Monthly Review*.

Even in his first paper, on *The Mythology of the Celtes*, by Mallet, the translator of the *Edda*, he opened with a statement which must have been out of the jog-trot of the *Dunciad* traditions.

'The learned on this side the Alps,' he said, 'have long laboured in the Antiquities of Greece and Rome, but almost totally neglected their own; like Conquerors who, while they have made inroads into the territories of their neighbours, have left their own natural dominions to desolation.'

It would be too much to trace the *Reliques of English Poetry* to this utterance; but, (as Forster says) 'it is wonderful what a word in season from a man of genius may do, even when the genius is hireling and obscure and only labouring for the bread it eats.' Meanwhile, the specimen review 'from the gentleman who signs, D,' although printed with certain omissions, secured Goldsmith's entry to Griffiths's periodical, and he criticised some notable books—Home's *Douglas*, Burke *On the Sublime*, Gray's *Odes*, the *Connoisseur*, Smollett's *History*—titles which at least prove that, utility man as he was, his competence was recognised from the first. The review of Gray, whose remoteness and 'obscurity' he regretted, and whom he advised to take counsel of Isocrates and

'study the people,' was, nevertheless, the last of his contributions to *The Monthly Review*. Whether the fault lay in his own restless nature, or whether he resented the vexatious editing of his work by the bookseller and his wife, the fact remains that, with September 1757, Goldsmith's permanent connection with Griffiths came to a close; and, for the next few months, he subsisted by contributing to *The Literary Magazine* and by other miscellaneous practice of the pen.

At this point, however, emerges his first prolonged literary effort, the remarkable rendering of the *Memoirs* of Jean Marteilhe of Bergerac, 'a Protestant condemned to the Gallies of France for his Religion,' which was published in February 1758. This translation, perhaps because it has been sometimes confused with that issued by the Religious Tract Society, has never received the attention it deserves. It is an exceedingly free and racy version of one of the most authentic records of the miseries ensuing on the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and Goldsmith, drudge as he was supposed to be, has treated his theme sympathetically. He may, indeed, have actually seen Marteilhe in Holland; but it is more reasonable to suppose that he was attracted to the subject by the advertisement, in *The Monthly Review* for May 1757, of the French original. The book is full of interest; and, as the fight of *The Nightingale* with the galleys, and the episode of Goujon, the young cadet of the Aubusson regiment, prove, by no means deficient in moving and romantic incident. Why, on this occasion, Goldsmith borrowed as his pseudonym the name of an old college-fellow, James Willington, it is idle to enquire. In his signed receipt, still extant, to Edward Dilly, for a third share in the volumes, they are expressly described as 'my translation,' and it is useful to note that the mode of sale, as will hereafter be seen, is exactly that subsequently adopted for the sale of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Anonymous or pseudonymous, Marteilhe's *Memoirs* had little effect on Goldsmith's fortunes; and the twenty pounds he received for the MS in January 1758, must have been quickly spent, for he was shortly at Peckham again, vaguely hoping that his old master would procure him a medical appointment on a foreign station. It was, no doubt, to obtain funds for his outfit that he began to plan his next book, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, for we find him in this year soliciting subscriptions from his friends in Ireland. When, at last, the nomination arrived, it was merely that of physician to

a Coromandel factory. What was worse, for some obscure reason, it came to nothing; and his next move was to present himself at Surgeons' hall—like Smollett's Roderick Random—as a ship's hospital mate, with the result that, in December, he was rejected as 'not qualified.' To put the seal on his embarrassments, this new effort involved him in fresh difficulties with his former employer, Griffiths, who had helped him to appear in decent guise before the examiners—difficulties from which he only extricated himself with much humiliation by engaging to write a life of Voltaire.

We next find him domiciled at 12 Green Arbour court, Little Old Bailey<sup>1</sup>, where, in March 1759, Percy, who had recently made his acquaintance through Grainger of *The Sugar Cane*, one of the staff of *The Monthly Review*, paid him a visit. He discovered him in a miserable room, correcting the proofs of his *Enquiry*, which appeared in the following month. For a small duodecimo of two hundred pages, it is, beyond doubt, ambitiously labelled. The field was too wide for so brief a survey; and, although the author professed that his sketch was mostly 'taken upon the spot,' it was obvious that he was imperfectly equipped for his task. What he had himself seen he described freshly and forcibly; and what he knew of the conditions of letters in England he depicted with feeling. He might talk largely of the learning of 'Luitprandus' and the 'philological performances' of Constantinus Afer; but what touched him more nearly was the mercantile avidity and sordid standards of the London bookseller, the hungry rancour of the venal writers in his pay, the poverty of the poets, the slow rewards of genius. Perhaps the most interesting features of the *Enquiry* are, primarily, that it is Goldsmith's earliest original work; and, next, that it is wholly free from that empty orotundity, that 'didactic stiffness of wisdom,' which his French models had led him to regard as the crying sin of his English contemporaries. To be 'dull and dronish,' he held, was 'an encroachment on the prerogative of a folio.' 'The most diminutive son of fame, or of famine, has his *we* and his *us*, his *firstlys* and his *secondlys* as methodical as if bound in cowhide, and closed with clasps of brass.' On the whole, the little book was well received, notwithstanding its censure of the two leading *Reviews*, and the fact that the chapter 'Of the Stage,' enforcing, as it did, Ralph's earlier *Case of Authors by Profession*, gave Garrick lasting offence—a circumstance to

<sup>1</sup> These premises were subsequently occupied by Smith, Elder & Co., as *The Cornhill Magazine* printing office, to which Thackeray sent his proofs. (Cf. *Roundabout Paper*, 'De Finibus,' August 1862, at end.)

which may be traced not only some of Goldsmith's later dramatic difficulties, but that popular 'poor Poll' couplet of which the portable directness rather than the truth has done much wrong to Goldsmith's reputation. To be as easily remembered as a limerick is no small help to a malicious epigram.

At this date, beyond a few lines dated 'Edinburgh, 1753,' the instalment of *The Traveller* sent to Henry Goldsmith from Switzerland, and the *Description of an Author's Bedchamber* included in another letter to the same address, little had been heard of Goldsmith's verse, although he had written vaguely of himself as a 'poet.' In the *Enquiry*, however, he published his first metrical effort, a translation of a Latin prologue in that recondite Macrobius with a quotation from whom, after an uncommunicative silence, Johnson electrified the company on his first arrival at Oxford. In the little periodical called *The Bee*, with which Goldsmith followed up the *Enquiry*, he included several rimed contributions. Of these, only one, some 'topical' stanzas, *On the Death of Wolfe*, is absolutely original. But the rest anticipate some of his later excellences—and personal opinions. In the *Elegy on Mrs Mary Blaize*, he laughs at the fashion, set by Gray, of funereal verse, and, in the bright little quatrains entitled *The Gift*, successfully reproduces the levity of Prior. But, what is more, he begins to exhibit his powers as a critic and essayist, to write character sketches in the vein of Addison and Steele, to reveal his abilities as a stage critic and censor of manners. One of the papers, *A City Night-Piece*, still remains a most touching comment on the shame of cities; another, the Lucianic reverie known as *The Fame Machine* (that is, 'coach'), in which Johnson, rejected by Jehu as a passenger for his *Dictionary*, is accepted on the strength of his *Rambler*, may have served to introduce him to the great man who, ever after, loved him with a growling but genuine affection. *The Bee*, though brief-lived, with similar things in *The Busy Body* and *The Lady's Magazine*, also brought him to the notice of some others, who, pecuniarily, were more important than Johnson. Smollett enlisted him for the new venture, *The British Magazine*, and bustling John Newbery of St Paul's churchyard, for a new paper, *The Public Ledger*.

For Smollett, besides a number of minor efforts, Goldsmith wrote two of his best essays, *A Reverie in the Boar's Head Tavern at Eastcheap*, and the semi-autobiographic *Adventures of a Strolling Player*; for Newbery, the *Chinese Letters*, afterwards

collected as *The Citizen of the World*. This production was his first permanent success. With its assumed orientalism, as with what it borrows from Montesquieu or his imitators, we can dispense, although it may be noted that a summary of the vices of the contemporary novel, long supposed to be Goldsmith's own, is a literal transcript of Du Halde. What is most enduring in the correspondence of Lien Chi Altangi is the fuller revelation, already begun in *The Bee*, of Goldsmith as a critic, a humourist and a social historiographer. It is Goldsmith on quacks and connoisseurs, on travellers' tales and funeral pomp, on mad dogs, on letters and the theatre, on such graver themes as the penal laws and public morality, to whom we turn most eagerly now. And of even greater interest than their good sense and good humour, their graphic touches and kindly shrewdness, is the evidence which these passages afford of the coming creator of Dr Primrose and Tony Lumpkin. In the admirable portrait of 'the Man in Black,' with his reluctant benevolence and his Goldsmith family traits, there is a foretaste of some of the attractive peculiarities of the vicar of Wakefield, while, in the picture of the pinched and tarnished little beau, with his parrot chatter about the countess of All-Night and the duke of Piccadilly, set to the forlorn burden of 'Lend me Half-a-Crown,' he adds a character sketch, however lightly touched, to that imperishable and, happily, inalienable gallery which contains the finished full-lengths of Parson Adams and Squire Western, of Matthew Bramble and 'My Uncle Toby.'

The last Chinese letter appeared on 14 August 1761, and, in May of the following year, the collection was issued in two volumes as *The Citizen of the World*, a phrase first used in Letter xx, and, perhaps, suggested by Bacon's *Essays* (no. XIII). At this date, Goldsmith had moved from the Little Old Bailey to 6 Wine Office court, Fleet street, where, on 31 May, he had been visited by Johnson. He had been editing *The Lady's Magazine*, in which appeared the *Memoirs of Voltaire* composed by him for Griffiths. He wrote a pamphlet on the popular imposture, the Cock lane ghost, and he compiled or revised *A History of Mecklenburgh*, the native country of king George III's consort. He published an anecdotal *Life of Richard Nash*, the fantastic old king of Bath, and seven volumes of *Plutarch's Lives*. More important than these activities, however, was the preparation of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, on which, according to Miss Gaussen<sup>1</sup>, he was engaged as early as June 1761. Internal evidence shows that the book must have

<sup>1</sup> *Percy: Prelate and Poet*, 1906, p. 144.

been written in 1761—2; and it is certain that a third share of it was purchased in October 1762 by Benjamin Collins of Salisbury, who afterwards printed it for Newbery<sup>1</sup>. It is to this date that must probably be referred the sale of the MS familiar to Boswell's readers, which, in that case, took place at Wine Office court, where the author would be close to Johnson's chambers in Inner Temple lane, on the opposite side of Fleet street. But, for obscure reasons, *The Vicar* was not issued until four years later, at which date it will be convenient to return to it.

Meanwhile, alternating incessant labour with fitful escapes to 'Bath or Tunbridge to careen,' and occasional residence at Islington, Goldsmith continued in bondage to 'book-building.' In 1764, he became one of the original members of the famous (and still existing) 'Club,' afterwards known as 'The Literary Club,' a proof of the eminence to which he had attained with the *literati*. This brought him at once into relations with Burke, Reynolds, Beauclerk, Langton and others of the Johnson circle. His next important work, *The History of England in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*, published in June, was, as had no doubt been intended, long attributed to Chesterfield and other patrician pens. Later, too, in the same year, Christopher Smart's *Hannah* moved him to the composition of *The Captivity*, an oratorio never set to music. Then, after the slow growth of months, was issued, on 19 December 1764, another of the efforts for his own hand with which he had diversified his hackwork—the poem entitled *The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society*.

In a spirit of independence which distinguishes this performance from its author's workaday output, *The Traveller* was dedicated to his brother, Henry Goldsmith, to whom the first sketch had been forwarded from abroad, and who, in Goldsmith's words, 'despising Fame and Fortune, had retired early to Happiness and Obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year'—the actual value of the curacy of Kilkenny West. The dedication further accentuates that distaste for blank verse which Goldsmith had already manifested in *An Enquiry*, as well as his antipathy, also revealed in *The Citizen of the World*, to the hectoring satires of Churchill; while the general purpose of the poem, anticipated by a passage in the forty-third letter of Lien Chi Altangi, is stated in the final words:

I have endeavoured to show, that there may be equal happiness in states, that are differently governed from our own, that every state has a particular

<sup>1</sup> This matter is discussed more fully in the bibliography.

principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess.

• Whether these postulates of the 'philosophic Wanderer'—as Johnson would have called him—are unanswerable or not matters little to us now. The poetry has outlived the purpose. What remains in Goldsmith's couplets is the beauty of the descriptive passages, the 'curious' simplicity of the language, the sweetness and finish of the verse. Where, in his immediate predecessors, are we to find the tender charm of such lines as

Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee;  
Still to my brother turns with ceaseless pain,  
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.

But me, not destin'd such delights to share,  
My prime of life in wand'ring spent and care,  
Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue  
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view;  
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,  
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;  
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,  
And find no spot of all the world my own.

It is characteristic both of Goldsmith, and of the mosaic of memories which the poetic theories of his day made legitimate, that, even in these few lines, there are happy recollections, and recollections, moreover, that he had already employed in prose.

*The Traveller* was an immediate and enduring success; and Newbery, so far as can be ascertained, gave Goldsmith £21 for it. Second, third and fourth editions quickly followed until, in 1774, the year of the author's death, a ninth was reached. Johnson, who contributed nine of the lines, declared it to be the best poem since the death of Pope, a verdict which, without disparagement to Goldsmith, may also be accepted as evidence of the great man's lack of sympathy with Gray, whose *Elegy* had appeared in the interval. Perhaps the most marked result of *The Traveller* was to draw attention to 'Oliver Goldsmith, M.B.,' whose name, for the first time, appeared on the title-page of Newbery's thin eighteen-penny quarto. People began to enquire for his earlier works, and thereupon came a volume of *Essays by Mr Goldsmith*, which comprised some of the best of his contributions to *The Bee*, *The Public Ledger* and the rest, together with some fresh specimens of verse, *The Double Transformation* and *A new Simile*. This was in June 1765, after which it seems to have occurred to the joint proprietors of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, that the fitting moment

had then arrived for the production of what they apparently regarded as their bad bargain. The novel was accordingly printed at Salisbury by Collins for Francis Newbery, John Newbery's nephew, and it was published on 27 March 1766, in two duodecimo volumes.

There is no reason for supposing that there were any material alterations in the MS which, in October 1762, had been sold by Johnson. 'Had I made it ever so perfect or correct,' said Goldsmith to Dr Parr (as reported in the *Percy Memoir*), 'I should not have had a shilling more'; and the slight modifications in the second edition prove nothing to the contrary. But it is demonstrable that there was one addition of importance, the ballad *The Hermit or Edwin and Angelina*, which had only been written, in or before 1765, for the amusement of the countess of Northumberland, for whom, in that year, it was privately printed. It was probably added to fill up chapter VIII, where, perhaps, a blank had been left for it, a conjecture which is supported by the fact that other *lacunae* have been suspected. But these purely bibliographical considerations have little relation to the real unity of the book, which seems to follow naturally on the character sketches of *The Citizen of the World*, to the composition of which it succeeded. In *The Citizen*, there is naturally more of the essayist than of the novelist; in *The Vicar*, more of the novelist than of the essayist. But the strong point in each is Goldsmith himself—Goldsmith's own thoughts and Goldsmith's own experiences. Squire Thornhill might have been studied in the pit at Drury lane, and even Mr Burchell conceivably evolved from any record of remarkable eccentrics. But the Primrose family must have come straight from Goldsmith's heart, from his wistful memories of his father and his brother Henry and his kind uncle Contarine and all that half-forgotten family group at Lissoy, who, in the closing words of his first chapter were 'all equally generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive.' He himself was his own 'Philosophic Vagabond pursuing Novelty, but losing Content,' as does George Primrose in chapter xx. One may smile at the artless inconsistencies of the plot, the lapses of the fable, the presence in the narrative of such makeweights as poetry, tales, political discourses and a sermon; but the author's genius and individuality rise superior to everything, and the little group of the Wakefield family are now veritable 'citizens of the world.' Only when some wholly new form has displaced or dispossessed the English novel will the Doctor and Mrs Primrose, Olivia and Sophia, Moses (with the green

until after the appearance at Drury lane of a vapid sentimental comedy by Kelly called *False Delicacy*, which, under Garrick's clever generalship, had an unmerited success. Six days later, on 29 January 1768, the ill-starred *Good-Natur'd Man* was brought out at Covent garden by a desponding manager, and a (for the most part) depressed cast. Nor did it derive much aid from a ponderous prologue by Johnson. Nevertheless, it was by no means ill received. Shuter made a hit with Croaker, and Woodward was excellent as Lofty, the two most important parts; and though, for a space, a 'genteel' audience could not suffer the 'low' scene of the bailiffs to come between the wind and its nobility, the success of the comedy, albeit incommensurate with its deserts and its author's expectations, was more than respectable. It ran for nine nights, three of which brought him £400; while the sale in book form, with the omitted scene, added £100 more. The worst thing was that it came after *False Delicacy*, instead of before it.

During its composition, Goldsmith had lived much at Islington, having a room in queen Elizabeth's old hunting lodge, Canonbury tower. In town, he had modest lodgings in the Temple. But £500 was too great a temptation; and, accordingly, leasing for three-fourths of that sum a set of rooms in Brick court, he proceeded to furnish them elegantly with Wilton carpets, moreen curtains and Pembroke tables. *Nil te quaesiveris extra*, Johnson had wisely said to him when he once apologised for his mean environment, and it would have been well if he had remembered the monition. But Goldsmith was Goldsmith—*qualis ab incepto*. The new expense meant new needs—and new embarrassments. Hence, we hear of *Roman and English Histories* for Davies and *A History of Animated Nature* for Griffin. The aggregate pay was more than £1500; but, for the writer of a unique novel, an excellent comedy and a deservedly successful poem, it was, assuredly, in his own words, 'to cut blocks with a razor.' All the same, he had not yet entirely lost his delight of life. He could still enjoy country excursions—'shoemakers' holidays' he called them—at Hampstead and Edgware; could still alternate 'The Club' in Gerrard street with the Crown at Islington and, occasionally, find pausing-places of memory and retrospect when, softening toward the home of his boyhood with a sadness made deeper by the death of his brother Henry in May 1768, he planned and perfected a new poem, *The Deserted Village*.

How far Auburn reproduced Lissoy, how far *The Deserted Village* was English or Irish—are surely matters for the seed-splitters of criticism; and decision either way in no wise affects

the enduring beauty of the work. The poem holds us by the humanity of its character pictures, by its delightful rural descriptions, by the tender melancholy of its metrical cadences. Listen to the 'Farewell' (and farewell it practically proved) to poetry :

Farewell, and O, where'er thy voice be tried,  
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,  
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,  
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,  
Still let thy voice prevailing over Time,  
Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;  
Aid slighted Truth, with thy persuasive strain  
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;  
Teach him, that states of native strength possess,  
Though very poor, may still be very blest.

Here, Goldsmith ended, if we may rely on Boswell's attribution to Johnson of the last four lines. They certainly supply a rounded finish<sup>1</sup>, and the internal evidence as to their authorship is not very apparent. But, if they are really Johnson's, it is an open question whether the more abrupt termination of Goldsmith, resting, in Dantesque fashion, on the word 'blest,' is not to be preferred.

Report says that Goldsmith's more critical contemporaries ranked *The Deserted Village* below *The Traveller*—a mistake perhaps to be explained by the intelligible, but often unreasoning, prejudice in favour of a first impression. He was certainly paid better for it, if it be true that he received a hundred guineas, which, although five times as much as he got for *The Traveller*, was still not more than Cadell paid six years later for Hannah More's forgotten *Sir Eldred of the Bower*. *The Deserted Village* was published on 26 May 1770, with an affectionate dedication to Reynolds, and ran through five editions in the year of issue. In the July following its appearance, Goldsmith paid a short visit to Paris with his Devonshire friends, Mrs and the Miss Hornecks, the younger of whom he had fitted with the pretty pet name 'the Jessamy Bride,' and who is supposed to have inspired him with more than friendly feelings. On his return, he fell again to the old desk work, a life of Bolingbroke, an abridgment of his *Roman History* and so forth. But he still found time for the exhibition of his more playful gifts, since it must have been about

<sup>1</sup>      That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,  
         As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away;  
         While self-respecting power can Time defy,  
         As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

this date that, in the form of an epistle to his friend Lord Clare, he threw off that delightful medley of literary recollection and personal experience, the verses known as *The Haunch of Venison*, in which the ease and lightness of Prior are wedded to the best measure of Swift. If the *chef d'œuvre* be really the equal of the *chef d'œuvre*, there is little better in Goldsmith's work than this pleasant *jeu d'esprit*. But he had a yet greater triumph to come, for, by the end of 1771, he had completed his second and more successful comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*.

At this date, the worries and vexations which had accompanied the production of *The Good-Natur'd Man* had been more or less forgotten by its author; and, as they faded, Goldsmith's old dreams of theatrical distinction returned. The sentimental snake, moreover, was not even scotched; and 'genteel comedy'—that 'mawkish drab of spurious breed,' as the opportunist Garrick came eventually to style it—had still its supporters: witness *The West Indian* of Cumberland, which had just been produced. Falling back on an earlier experience of his youth, the mistaking of squire Featherston's house for an inn, Goldsmith set to work on a new comedy; and, after much rueful wandering in the lanes of Hendon and Edgware, 'studying jests with the most tragical countenance,' Tony Lumpkin and his mother, Mr Hardcastle and his daughter, were gradually brought into being, 'to be tried in the manager's fire.' The ordeal was to the full as severe as before. Colman accepted the play, and then delayed to produce it. His tardiness embarrassed the author so much that, at last, in despair, he transferred the piece to Garrick. But, here, Johnson interposed, and, though he could not induce Colman to believe in it, by the exercise 'of a kind of force,' prevailed on him to bring it out. Finally, after it had been read to 'the Club,' in January 1773, under its first title *The Old House, a New Inn*, and, assisted to some extent by Foote's clever anti-sentimental puppet-show *Piety in Pattens; or, the Handsome Housemaid*, it was produced at Covent garden on 15 March 1773, as *She Stoops to Conquer; or, the Mistakes of a Night*. When on the boards, supported by the suffrages of the author's friends, and enthusiastically welcomed by the public, the play easily triumphed over a caballing manager and a lukewarm company, and, thus, one of the best modern comedies was at once lifted to an eminence from which it has never since been deposed. It brought the author four or five hundred pounds, and would have brought him more by its sale in book form, had he not, in a moment of depression, handed over the copyright to

Newbery, in discharge of a debt. But he inscribed the play to Johnson, in one of those dedications which, more, perhaps, than elsewhere, vindicate his claim to the praise of having touched nothing that he did not adorn.

Unhappily, by this time, his affairs had reached a stage of complication from which little short of a miracle could extricate him; and there is no doubt that his involved circumstances affected his health, as he had already been seriously ill in 1772. During the few months of life that remained to him, he did not publish anything, his hands being full of promised work. His last metrical effort was *Retaliation*, a series of epitaph-epigrams, left unfinished at his death, and prompted by some similar, though greatly inferior, efforts directed against him by Garrick and other friends. In March 1774, the combined effects of work and worry, added to a local disorder, brought on a nervous fever which he aggravated by the unwise use of a patent medicine, James's powder, on which, like many of his contemporaries, he placed too great a reliance. On the 10th, he had dined with Percy at the Turk's Head. Not many days after, when Percy called on him, he was ill. A week later, the sick man just recognised his visitor. On Monday, 4 April, he died; and he was buried on the 9th in the burial ground of the Temple church. Two years subsequently, a memorial was erected to him in Westminster abbey, with a Latin epitaph by Johnson, containing, among other things, the oft-quoted *affectuum potens, at lenis dominator*. An even more suitable farewell is, perhaps, to be found in the simpler 'valediction *cum osculo*' which his rugged old friend inserted in a letter to Langton: 'Let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man.'

Goldsmith's physical likeness must be sought between the idealised portrait painted by Reynolds early in 1770, and the semi-grotesque 'head' by Bunbury prefixed to the posthumous issue in 1776 of *The Haunch of Venison*. As to his character, it has suffered a little from the report of those to whom, like Walpole, Garrick, Hawkins and Boswell, his peculiarities were more apparent than his genius; though certain things must be admitted because he admits them himself. Both early and late, he confesses to a trick of blundering, a slow and hesitating utterance, an assumed pomposity which looked like self-importance. He had also a distinct brogue which he cultivated rather than corrected. But as to 'talking like poor Poll,' the dictum requires qualification. It is quite intelligible that, in the dominating presence of Johnson, whose magisterial manner overrode both

Burke and Gibbon, Goldsmith, who was twenty years younger, whose wit reached its flashing point but fitfully, and who was easily disconcerted in argument, should not have appeared at his best, though there were cases when, to use a colloquialism, he 'got home' even on the great man himself—witness the happy observation that Johnson would make the little fishes of fable-land talk like whales. But evidence is not wanting that Goldsmith could converse delightfully in more congenial companies. With respect to certain other imputed shortcomings—the love of fine clothes, for instance—the most charitable explanation is the desire to extenuate physical deficiencies, inseparable from a morbid self-consciousness; while, as regards his extravagance, something should be allowed for the accidents of his education, and for the canker of poverty which had eaten into his early years. And it must be remembered that he would give his last farthing to any plausible applicant, and that he had the kindest heart in the world.

As a literary man, what strikes one most is the individuality—the intellectual detachment of his genius. He is a standing illustration of Boswell's clever contention that the fowls running about the yard are better flavoured than those which are fed in coops. He belonged to no school; he formed none. If, in his verse, we find traces of Addison or Prior, of Lesage or Fielding in his novel, of Farquhar or Cibber in his comedies, those traces are in the pattern and not in the stuff. The stuff is Goldsmith—Goldsmith's philosophy, Goldsmith's heart, Goldsmith's untaught grace, simplicity, sweetness. He was but forty-six when he died; and he was maturing to the last. Whether his productive period had ceased, whether, with a longer span, he would have gone higher—may be doubted. But, notwithstanding a mass of hackwork which his faculty of lucid exposition almost raised to a fine art, he contrived, even in his short-life, to leave behind him some of the most finished didactic poetry in the language; some unsurpassed familiar verse; a series of essays ranking only below Lamb's; a unique and original novel; and a comedy which, besides being readable, is still acted to delighted audiences. He might have lived longer and done less; but at least he did not live long enough to fall below his best.

## CHAPTER X

### THE LITERARY INFLUENCE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN. CHATTERTON.

PERCY AND THE WARTONS

It is scarcely a paradox to say that the Middle Ages have influenced modern literature more strongly through their architecture than through their poems. Gothic churches and old castles have exerted a medieval literary influence on many authors who have had no close acquaintance with old French and German poets, and not much curiosity about their ideals or their style. Even in writers better qualified by study of medieval literature, like Southey and Scott, it is generally the historical substance of the Middle Ages rather than anything in the imaginative form of old poetry or romance that attracts them. Even William Morris, who is much more affected by the manner of old poetry than Scott, is curiously unmedieval in much of his poetry; there is nothing of the old fashion in the poem *The Defence of Guenevere*, and the old English rhythm of the song in *Sir Peter Harpdon's End* is in striking contrast, almost a discord, with the dramatic blank verse of the piece. Medieval verse has seldom been imitated or revived without the motive of parody, as, for instance, in Swinburne's *Masque of Queen Bersabe*; the great exception is in the adoption of the old ballad measures, from which English poetry was abundantly refreshed through Wordsworth, Scott and Coleridge. And here, also, though the ballad measures live and thrive all through the nineteenth century so naturally that few people think of their debt to Percy's *Reliques*, yet, at the beginning, there is parody in the greatest of all that race, *The Ancient Mariner*—not quite so obvious in the established version as in the first editions (in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798 and 1800), but still clear enough.

The Middle Ages did much to help literary fancy long before the time of Scott; but the thrill of mystery and wonder came

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much more from Gothic buildings than from *Morte d'Arthur*, and it is found in writers who had paid little or no attention to old English romance, as well as in those who showed their interest in it. The famous passage in Congreve's *Mourning Bride* is romantic in spirit and intention, and its success is won from a Gothic cathedral, with no intermediary literature. So, also, the romantic ruin in the first version of Collins's *Ode to Evening*, 'whose walls more awful nod,' is pictorial, not literary, except in the conventional 'nod,' which is literary, indeed, but not at all medieval. This 'nod,' by the way, has been carefully studied in *Guesses at Truth*<sup>1</sup>; it is a good criterion of the eighteenth century romantic style; Collins, happily, got rid of it, and saved his poem unblemished.

Medieval literary studies undoubtedly encouraged the taste for such romantic effects as are beheld when abbeys or ruined castles are visited by twilight or moonlight; but the literary Gothic terror or wonder could be exercised without any more knowledge of the Middle Ages than Victor Hugo possessed, whose *Notre Dame de Paris* owes hardly anything of its triumph to medieval books. On the other hand, there was much literature of the Middle Ages known and studied in the earlier part of the eighteenth century without any great effect upon the aims or sensibilities of practising men of letters. There seems to have been no such prejudice against medieval literature, as there undoubtedly was, for a long time, against Gothic architecture. 'Black letter' poetry and the books of chivalry were, naturally and rightly, believed to be old-fashioned, but they were not depreciated more emphatically than were the Elizabethans; and, perhaps, the very want of exact historical knowledge concerning the Middle Ages allowed reading men to judge impartially when medieval things came under their notice. Dryden's praise of Chaucer is, altogether and in every particular, far beyond the reach of his age in criticism; but it is not at variance with the common literary judgment of his time, or of Pope's. The principle is quite clear; in dealing with Chaucer, one must allow for his ignorance of true English verse and, of course, for his old English phrasing; but, then, he is to be taken on his merits, for his imagination and his narrative skill, and, so taken, he comes out a better example of sound poetical wit than Ovid himself, and more truly a follower of nature. Pope sees clearly and is not put off by literary prejudices; the theme of *Eloisa to Abelard* is neither better nor worse for dating back to the twelfth century, and he appropriated *The*

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 44 ff. Eversley Series edn. 1897.

*Temple of Fame* from Chaucer because he finds that its substance is good enough for him. Addison's estimate of *Cherry Chace* is made in nearly the same spirit; only, here something controversial comes in. He shows that the old English ballad has some of the qualities of classical epic; epic virtues are not exclusively Greek and Roman. Yet, curiously, there is an additional moral; the ballad is not used as an alternative to the modern taste for correct writing, but, on the contrary, as a reproof to the metaphysical school, an example of 'the essential and inherent perfection of simplicity of thought.' It is significant that the opposite manner, which is not simple, but broken up into epigram and points of wit, is called 'Gothick' by Addison; the imitators of Cowley are 'Gothick'; the medieval ballad, which many people would have reckoned 'Gothick,' is employed as an example of classical simplicity to refute them. 'Gothick' was so very generally used to denote what is now called 'medieval'—'the Gothick romances,' 'the Gothick mythology of elves and fairies'—that Addison's paradoxical application of the term in those two papers can hardly have been unintentional; it shows, at any rate, that the prejudice against Gothic art did not mislead him in his judgment of old-fashioned poetry. In his more limited measure, he agrees with Dryden and Pope. What is Gothic in date may be classical in spirit.

Medievalism was one of the minor eccentric fashions of the time, noted by Dryden in his reference to his 'old Saxon friends,' and by Pope with his 'mister wight'; but those shadows of 'The Upheaving of Ælfred' were not strong enough, for good or ill, either to make a romantic revival or to provoke a modern curse on paladins and troubadours. Rymer, indeed, who knew more than anyone else about old French and Provençal poetry, was the loudest champion of the unities and classical authority. Medieval studies, including the history of poetry, could be carried on without any particular bearing on modern productive art, with no glimmering of a medievalist romantic school and no threatening of insult or danger to the most precise and scrupulous modern taste. It would seem that the long 'battle of the books,' the debate of ancients and moderns in France and England, had greatly mitigated, if not altogether quenched, the old jealousy of the Middle Ages which is exemplified in Ben Jonson's tirade:

No Knights o' the Sun, nor Amadis de Gaula,  
Primaleons, Pantagruels, public nothings,  
Abortives of the fabulous dark cloister.

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This is the old scholarly contempt for the Middle Ages ; it is coming to be out of date in Jonson's time. The books of chivalry recovered some of their favour, as they ceased to be dangerous distractions ; those who laughed at *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* were not ashamed to read *The Seven Champions of Christendom*. There is a pleasant apology for the old romances by Chapelain in France, an author more determined than Ben Jonson in his obedience to literary rules. And it may be supposed that, later, when the extreme modern party had gone so far as to abuse Homer for his irregularities and barbarous want of taste, there would be less inclination among sensible men to find fault with medieval roughness ; cavilling at superfluities in romance might be all very well, but it was too like the scandalous treatment of Homer by Perrault and his party ; those, on the other hand, who stood up for Homer might be the less ready to censure *Amadis of Gaul*. There may be something of this motive in Addison's praise of *Chevy Chase* ; at any rate, he has sense to find the classical excellences where the pedantic moderns would not look for anything of the sort.

Modern literature and the minds of modern readers are so affected by different strains of medieval influence through various 'romantic' schools, through history, travel and the study of languages, that it is difficult to understand the temper of the students who broke into medieval antiquities in the seventeenth century and discovered much poetry by the way, though their chief business was with chronicles and state papers. It is safe to believe that everything which appeals to any reader as peculiarly medieval in the works of Tennyson or Rossetti was not apparent to Hickee or Hearne or Rymer, any more than it was to Leibniz (a great medieval antiquary), or, later, to Muratori, who makes poetry one of his many interests in the course of work resembling Rymer's, though marked by better taste and intelligence. The Middle Ages were studied, sometimes, with a view to modern applications ; but these were generally political or religious, not literary. And, in literary studies, it is long before anything like *Ivanhoe* or anything like *The Defence of Guenevere* is discernible. Before the spell of the grail was heard again, and before the vision of Dante was at all regarded, much had to be learned and many experiments to be made. The first attraction from the Middle Ages, coming as a discovery due to antiquarian research and not by way of tradition, was that of old northern heroic poetry, commonly called Icelandic—'Islandic,' as Percy spells it. Gray,

## Temple, The Death-Song of Ragnar Lodbrok 221

when he composed *The Descent of Odin* and *The Fatal Sisters*, drew from sources which had been made known in England in the seventeenth century. These, in their effect on English readers, formed the first example of the literary influence of the Middle Ages, consciously recognised as such, and taken up with antiquarian literary interest.

Of course, the whole of modern literature is full of the Middle Ages; the most disdainful modern classicist owes, in France, his alexandrine verse to the twelfth century and, in England, his heroic verse to a tradition older still. The poet who stands for the perfection of the renaissance in Italy, Ariosto, derives his stanza from the lyric school of Provence, and is indebted for most of his matter to old romances. Through Chaucer and Spenser, through *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, through many chapbooks and through the unprinted living folklore of England, the Middle Ages formed the minds of Dryden and Pope and their contemporaries. But, for a distinct and deliberate notice of something medieval found by study and considered to be available in translation or adaptation, one must go to Sir William Temple's remarks about *The Death-Song of Ragnar Lodbrok*; it is hard to find anything of the same sort earlier. What marks it out is not so much the literary curiosity which selects it, but the literary estimate which judges this ancient northern piece to have a present value. Thereby, Sir William Temple begins the modern sort of literary study which looks for suggestion in old remote and foreign regions, and he sets a precedent for the explorations of various romantic schools, wandering through all the world in search of plots, scenery and local colour.

Here, it may be objected that this kind of exploration was nothing new; that the Middle Ages themselves had collected stories from all the ends of the earth; that Elizabethans range as far as Southey or Victor Hugo; that Racine, too, calculates the effect of what is distant and what is foreign, in his choice of subjects for tragedy, *Iphigénie* or *Bajazet*. What, then, is specially remarkable in the fact that Scandinavian legend was noted as interesting, and that Sir William Temple gave an hour of study to the death-song of Ragnar? The novelty is in the historical motive. *The Death-Song of Ragnar* is intelligible without much historical commentary; anyone can understand the emphatic phrases: 'we smote with swords' (*pugnāvimus ensibus*); 'laughing I die' (*ridens moriar*)—not to speak of the mistranslated lines

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which represent the heroes in Valhalla drinking ale out of the skulls of their enemies :

*Bibemus cerevisiam  
Ex concavis crateribus craniorum.*

Those things<sup>\*</sup> caught men's fancy ; and the honourable, courageous viking was launched to try his fortune in modern romantic literature. But there was the historical interest, besides ; and Temple, in his essay *Of Heroic Virtue*, notices the song of Ragnar because it explains something in the past, and contributes something to the experience of the human race. He takes up 'runic' literature again in his essay *Of Poetry* ; he is working on the same lines as Sidney and attending the progress of poesy from its early life among the barbarians. He vindicates, like Daniel, the right of the Gothic nations to a share in the humanities. And he proves, by particulars, what Sidney and Daniel had left vague ; he exhibits this specimen from a definite tract of country ; and his quotation has a double effect ; it touches those readers who may be looking for a new thrill and fresh sources of amazement ; it touches those also who, besides this craving, are curious about the past ; who are historically minded and who try to understand the various fashions of thought in different ages. Thus, one significance of this quotation from Ragnar's death-song is that it helps to alter the historical view of the world. Historical studies had suffered from the old prevalent opinion (still strong in the eighteenth century, if not later) that all ages of the world are very much alike. *The Death-Song of Ragnar* and other references to the heroic poetry of Norway were like distance marks which brought out the perspective.

Scandinavian suggestions did not lead immediately to any very large results in English poetry or fiction. Macpherson came in later and took their ground ; the profits all went to Ossian. Students of northern antiquities were too conscientious and not daring enough ; Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* came out humbly in the wake of Macpherson ; his book is like what the Icelanders, in a favourite contemptuous figure, call 'the little boat towed behind'<sup>1</sup>. But the history of Scandinavian studies is worth some notice, though Odin and his friends achieved no such sweeping victories as the heroes of Morven.

Temple's authorities are Scandinavian, not English, scholars ; he conversed at Nimeguen on these subjects with count

<sup>1</sup> 'It would be as vain to deny, as it is perhaps impolitic to mention, that this attempt is owing to the success of the Erse fragments' (*Five Pieces*, 1763, Preface).

Oxenstierna, and he quotes from Olaus Wormius. But northern studies were already flourishing in England by means of the Oxford press, to which Junius had given founts of type from which were printed his Gothic and Old English gospels, and where the founts are still preserved and ready for use. Junius's type was used in printing Hickes's Icelandic grammar, which was afterwards included in the magnificent *Thesaurus Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium*. It was used, also, for E. G.'s (Edmund Gibson's) Oxford edition of *Polemo-Middlinia* and of *Christis Kirk on the Grene* (1691), which was brought out as a philological joke, with no detriment to philological science. Gothic, Icelandic, Old English and the languages of Chaucer and Gawain Douglas are all employed in illustration of these two excellent comic poems, for the benefit of the 'joco-serious Commonwealth' to which the book is dedicated.

Hickes's *Thesaurus* is a great miscellaneous work on the antiquities of all the Teutonic languages. One page in it has now the authority of an original Old English document, for there he printed the heroic lay of *Finnsburh* from a manuscript at Lambeth which is not at present to be found. On the opposite page and immediately following is an Icelandic poem : Hervor at her father Angantyr's grave, calling upon him to give up the magic sword which had been buried with him. This poem is translated into English prose, and it had considerable effect on modern literature. It was thought good enough, and not too learned or recondite, to be reprinted in the new edition of Dryden's *Miscellany*, Part VI, in 1716, Icelandic text and all. It seems to have been an after-thought of the editor, or in compliance with a suggestion from outside which the editor was too idle to refuse—for the piece is printed with Hickes's heading, which refers to the preceding piece (*Finnsburh*) in the *Thesaurus* and compares the Icelandic with the Old English verse—quite unintelligible as it stands, abruptly, in the *Miscellany*<sup>1</sup>. But, however it came about, the selection is a good one, and had as much success as is possible to those shadowy ancient things. It is repeated, under the title *The Incantation of Hervor* by Percy, as the first of his *Five Runic Pieces*; and, after this, it became a favourite subject for paraphrase; it did not escape 'Monk' Lewis; and it appears as *L'Épée d'Angantyr* in the *Poèmes barbares* of Leconte de Lisle.

Percy's second piece is *The Dying Ode of Ragnar Lodbrog*. This had not been left unnoticed after Temple's quotation from it. Thomas Warton the elder translated the two stanzas which Temple

took from his authority, the *Literatura Runica* of Olaus Wormius; they appeared as 'a Runic Ode' in the posthumous volume of his poems (1748). They counted for something in the education of Thomas the younger and Joseph Warton, together with the architecture of Winchester and Windsor, and the poetry of Spenser and Milton.

It will be observed that Old English poetry had none of this success—very slight success indeed, but still ascertainable—which attended *The Death-Song of Ragnar* and *The Incantation of Hervor*. Perhaps, if Hickes had translated *The Fight at Finnsburh*—but he did not, and so the Icelandic page was taken and the Old English left. Apart from that accident, there was good reason for the greater success of the 'runic' or 'Islandic' poems. They are much more compact and pointed than anything in Old English. The poem of Hervor is an intensely passionate lyrical drama; the song of Ragnar is an emphatic rendering of the heroic spirit of the north; the poem is itself the product of an early romantic movement which had learned the artistic use of heroic phrases, and makes the most of them in a loud metallic way. The literary artifice can be detected now; the difference from the older heroic style is as great as that between Burns and Barbour in their idea of the valiant king Robert and the eloquence of Bannockburn. But this calculated and brassy emphasis all went to establish *The Death-Song* as a remarkable proof of early poetical genius in the north, and a type of northern heroic virtue.

The other three pieces in Percy's volume had less *vogue* than Ragnar and the sword of Angantyr. One is *The Ransome of Egill the Scald*, taken from Olaus Wormius. It had been appreciated already by Temple, who calls the poet by the name of his father, but means Egil when he says 'Scallogrim.' The passage may be quoted; it follows immediately on *The Death-Song of Ragnar*:

I am deceived, if in this sonnet, and a following ode of Scallogrim (which was likewise made by him after he was condemned to die, and deserved his pardon for a reward) there be not a vein truly poetical, and in its kind Pindaric, taking it with the allowance of the different climates, fashions, opinions, and languages of such distant countries.

Unfortunately, the prose history of Egil Skallagrimsson was not printed as yet, and could not be used by Percy. There is a curious neglect of history in Percy's notes on the two poems that follow: *The Funeral Song of Hacon* and *The Complaint of Harold*. The selection of the poems is a good one; but it is clear that, with the editor, the mythological interest is stronger than the

historical. His principal guide is *Introduction à l'histoire du Danemarck* by Chevalier Mallet, as to which we read: 'A translation of this work is in great forwardness, and will shortly be published.' It is curious to see how the connection with the Oxford press and the tradition of Junius and Hickes is still maintained; Percy here (as also in the preface to his *Reliques*) acknowledges the help of Lye, whose edition of the Gothic Gospels was published at Oxford in 1750. The 'Islandic Originals,' added by Percy after his translations, were plainly intended as a reminder to Macpherson that the original Gaelic of *Fingal* was still unpublished. The *Five Pieces*, it should be observed, were issued without Percy's name.

Gray's two translations from the Icelandic<sup>1</sup> are far the finest result of those antiquarian studies, and they help to explain how comparatively small was the influence of the north upon English poetry. How much Gray knew of the language is doubtful; but he certainly knew something, and did not depend entirely on the Latin translations which he found in Bartholinus or Torfæus. He must have caught something of the rhythm, in

*Vindum, vindum  
Vef darradar,*

and have appreciated the sharpness and brilliance of certain among the phrases. His *Descent of Odin* and his *Fatal Sisters* are more than a mere exercise in a foreign language, or a record of romantic things discovered in little-known mythologies. The Icelandic poems were more to Gray than they were to any other scholar, because they exactly correspond to his own ideals of poetic style—concise, alert, unmuffled, never drawling or clumsy. Gray must have felt this. It meant that there was nothing more to be done with 'runic' poetry in English. It was all too finished, too classical. No modern artist could hope to improve upon the style of the northern poems; and the subjects of northern mythology, good as they were in themselves, would be difficult and dangerous if clothed in English narrative or dramatic forms. Gray uses what he can, out of his Icelandic studies, by transferring some of the motives and phrases to a British theme, in *The Bard*.

In Hickes's *Thesaurus* may be found many curious specimens of what is now called Middle English: he quotes *Poema Morale*, and he gives in full *The Land of Cockayne*. He discusses versification, and notes in Old English verse a greater regard for quantity than in modern English (giving examples from Cowley of short syllables lengthened and long shortened); while, in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ante*, chap. vii, pp. 129 ff.

discussing alliteration, he quotes from modern poets, Donne, Waller, Dryden. It might be said that the promise of the *History of English Poetry* is there; Hickes certainly does much in the ground later occupied by Warton. Gibson's little book may be mentioned again as part of the same work; and it had an effect more immediate than Hickes's 'semi-Saxon' quotations. There was an audience ready for *Christis Kirk on the Grene*, and E. G. ought to be honoured in Scotland as a founder of modern Scottish poetry and one of the ancestors of Burns<sup>1</sup>. Allan Ramsay took up the poem, and, thus, E. G.'s new-year diversion (intended, as he says, for the Saturnalia) is related to the whole movement of that age in favour of ballads and popular songs, as well as specially to the new Scottish poetry of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns.

If Percy's *Reliques* be taken as the chief result of this movement, then we may judge that there were in it two main interests—one, antiquarian; one, simply a liking for poetry, wherever found, with an inclination to find it in the 'silly sooth' of popular rimes. Thus, the search for ballads is only partially and accidentally medieval. But it has a likeness to all 'romantic' schools, in so far as it turns away from fashionable and conventional literature, and it was natural that lovers of ballads should also be fond of old English poetry in general—a combination of tastes well exhibited in the famous folio MS which was used by Percy and now bears his name.

Addison's essays on *Chevy Chace* and *The Children in the Wood* show how ballads were appreciated; and, in the last of these, he notes particularly how the late Lord Dorset 'had a numerous collection of old English ballads and took a particular pleasure in reading them.' Addison proceeds: 'I can affirm the same of Mr Dryden, and know several of the most refined writers of our present age who are of the same humour.' And then he speaks of Molière's thoughts on the subject, as he has expressed them in *Le Misanthrope*. Ballads, it is plain, had an audience ready for them, and they were provided in fair quantity long before Percy. The imitation of them began very early; Lady Wardlaw's *Hardyknute* was published in 1719 as an ancient poem; and again in Ramsay's *Evergreen* (1724).

Between ballads and Scottish songs, which seem to have been welcome everywhere, and ancient 'runic' pieces, which were praised occasionally by amateurs, it would seem as if old

<sup>1</sup> As to the publication of *Christis Kirk* in Watson's *Choice Collection* (1706-11) and Allan Ramsay's addition to the poem, cf. *ante*, vol. ix, pp. 366 and 367.

English poems, earlier than Chaucer, were neglected. But we know from Pope's scheme of a history of English poetry that they were not forgotten, though it was left for Warton to study them more minutely. Pope's liberality of judgment may be surprising to those who take their opinions ready made. He was not specially interested in the Middle Ages, but neither was he intolerant, whatever he might say about monks and 'the long Gothic night.' He never repudiated his debt to Spenser; and, in his praise of Shakespeare, he makes amends to the Middle Ages for anything he had said against them: Shakespeare, he says, is 'an ancient and majestick piece of Gothick architecture compared with a neat modern building.' But, before the mediæval poetry of England could be explored in accordance with the suggestions of Pope's historical scheme, there came the triumph of Ossian, which utterly overwhelmed the poor scrupulous experiments of 'runic' translators, and carried off the greatest men—Goethe, Bonaparte—in a common enthusiasm.

Ossian, like Ragnar Lodbrok, belongs to a time earlier than what is now generally reckoned the Middle Ages; it was not till after Macpherson that the chivalrous Middle Ages—the world of *Ivanhoe* or *The Talisman*, of *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*—came to their own again. There was something in the earlier times which seems to have been more fascinating. But Ossian did not need to concern himself much about his date and origin; there was no serious rivalry to be feared either from *The Descent of Odin* or *The Castle of Otranto*. Only a few vestiges of mediæval literature contributed to the great victory, which was won, not unfairly, by rhythm, imagery and sentiment, historical and local associations helping in various degrees. The author or translator of Ossian won his great success fairly, by unfair means. To call him an impostor is true, but insufficient. When Ossian dethroned Homer in the soul of Werther, the historical and antiquarian fraud of Macpherson had very little to do with it. Werther and Charlotte mingle their tears over the 'Songs of Selma'; it would be an insult to Goethe to suppose that he translated and printed these 'Songs' merely as interesting philological specimens of the ancient life of Scotland, or that he was not really possessed and enchanted by the melancholy winds and the voices of the days of old. Blair's opinion about Ossian is stated in such terms as these:

The description of Fingal's airy hall, in the poem called *Berrathon*, and of the ascent of Malvina into it deserves particular notice, as remarkably noble and magnificent. But above all, the engagement of Fingal with the Spirit of

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Loda, in *Caric-thura*, cannot be mentioned without admiration. I forbear transcribing the passage, as it must have drawn the attention of every one who has read the works of Ossian. The undaunted courage of Fingal, opposed to all the terrors of the Scandinavian god; the appearance and the speech of the awful spirit; the wound which he receives, and the shriek which he sends forth, 'as rolled into himself, he rose upon the wind,' are full of the most amazing and terrible majesty, that *I know no passage more sublime in the writings of any uninspired author.*

Blair, as a doctor of divinity and professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres, was bound to be careful in his language, and, if it here seems extravagant, it is certainly not careless. His deliberate judgment as to the sublimity of Ossian must be taken as absolutely sincere, and it cannot be sincere if not founded on the text as it stands, if bribed or biassed in any measurable degree by antiquarian considerations. And the praise of Goethe and Blair was honestly won by Macpherson; his imagery, thoughts and sentences are estimated by these critics for the effect upon their minds. What they desire is beauty of imagination, thought and language; these, they find in Ossian, the published Ossian, the book in their hands; if Macpherson wrote it all, then their praise belongs to him. Nothing can alter the fact that sentences were written and published which were good enough to obtain this praise; all Macpherson's craft as a philological impostor would have been nothing without his literary skill. He was original enough, in a peculiar way, to touch and thrill the whole of Europe.

The glamour of Ossian is only very partially to be reckoned among the literary influences of the Middle Ages. It is romantic, in every acceptance of that too significant word. But 'romantic' and 'medieval' are not the same thing. The Middle Ages help the modern romantic authors in many ways, and some of these may be found in Ossian; the vague twilight of Ossian, and the persistent tones of lamentation, are in accordance with many passages of old Scandinavian poetry—of *The Lays of Helgi* and *The Lament of Gudrun*, in the elder *Edda*—with many old ballads, with much of the Arthurian legend. But those very likenesses may prove a warning not to take 'medieval' as meaning the exclusive possession of any of those qualities or modes. If certain fashions of sentiment are found both in the elder *Edda* and in *Morte d'Arthur*, it is probable that they will be found also in ancient Babylon and in the South Sea islands. And, if the scenery and sentiment of Ossian are not peculiarly medieval, though they are undoubtedly romantic, the spell of Ossian, as we

may fitly call it—that is, the phrases and rhythmical cadences—are obviously due to the inspired writings with which Blair, by a simple and wellknown device of rhetoric, was willing to compare them. The language of Ossian is copied from David and Isaiah. It is enough to quote from the passage whose sublimity no uninspired author has outdone—the debate of Fingal and the ‘spirit of dismal Loda’:

‘Dost thou force me from my place?’ replied the hollow voice. ‘The people bend before me. I turn the battle in the field of the brave. I look on the nations and they vanish; my nostrils pour the blast of death. I come abroad on the winds: the tempests are before my face. But my dwelling is calm, above the clouds; the fields of my rest are pleasant.’

Another quotation may be taken from the other place selected by Blair (which, by the way, is close to Werther's last momentous quotation, following on ‘Selma’):

Malvina! where art thou, with thy songs, with the soft sound of thy steps? Son of Alpin, art thou near? where is the daughter of Toscar? ‘I passed, O son of Fingal, by Tor-lutha's mossy walls. The smoke of the hall was ceased. Silence was among the trees of the hill. The voice of the chase was over. I saw the daughters of the bow. I asked about Malvina, but they answered not. They turned their faces away: thin darkness covered their beauty. They were like stars, on a rainy hill, by night, each looking faintly through her mist.’

The last sentence is in a different measure from the rest of the passage. Most of it, and almost the whole of Ossian, is in parallel phrases, resembling Hebrew poetry. This was observed by Malcolm Laing, and is practically acknowledged by Macpherson in the parallel passages which he gives in his notes; his admirers dwelt upon the ‘uninspired’ eloquence which reminded them of the Bible. It sometimes resembles the oriental manner satirised by Goldsmith in *The Citizen of the World*<sup>1</sup>: ‘there is nothing like sense in the true Eastern style, where nothing more is required but sublimity.’

But Macpherson did not invent the whole of Ossian out of his own head: he knew a good deal of Gaelic poetry. If he had been more of a Celtic scholar, he might have treated Gaelic songs as Hickes did *The Incantation of Hervor*, printing the text with a prose translation, and not asking for any favour from ‘the reading public.’ But he wished to be popular, and he took the right way to that end—leaving Percy in the cold shade with his *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* and his philological compilations.

The life of Macpherson has the interest of an ironical fable.

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Nemesis came upon him with a humorous cruelty ; no detective romance ever worked out a more coherent plot. The end of the story is that Macpherson, long after his first successes, was compelled by the enthusiasm of his supporters to provide them with Gaelic originals. He laboured hard to compose the Gaelic Ossian, when he was weary of the whole affair. He would gladly have been allowed to pass with credit as the original composer of the English Ossian, which was all that he really cared for. But his ingenuity had brought him to this dilemma, that he could not claim what really belonged to him in the invention of Ossian without affronting his generous friends ; and so, twenty years after his triumph, he had to sit down in cold blood and make his ancient Gaelic poetry. He had begun with a piece of literary artifice, a practical joke ; he ended with deliberate forgery, which, the more it succeeded, would leave to him the less of what was really his due for the merits of the English Ossian.

James Macpherson was born in 1736 near Kingussie, the son of a small farmer. He did well at the university of Aberdeen and then, for some time, was schoolmaster in his native parish, Ruthven. His literary tastes and ambitions were keen, and, in 1758, he published a poem, *The Highlander*. About this date, he was made tutor to the son of Graham of Balgowan, and, in 1759, he went to Moffat with his pupil (Thomas Graham, the hero of Barrosa) ; from which occasion the *vogue* of Ossian began. At Moffat, Macpherson met John Home, the author of *Douglas*, who was full of the romantic interest in the Highlands which he passed on to Collins, and which was shared by Thomson. Macpherson really knew something about Gaelic poetry, and particularly the poems of Ossianic tradition which were generally popular in Badenoch. But his own literary taste was too decided to let him be content with what he knew ; he honestly thought that the traditional Gaelic poems were not very good ; he saw the chance for original exercises on Gaelic themes. His acquaintance Home, however, wanted to get at the true Celtic spirit, which, at the same time, ought to agree with what he expected of it. Macpherson supplied him with *The Death of Oscar*, a thoroughly romantic story, resembling in plot Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, but more tragical—it ended in the death of the two rivals and the lady also. This was followed by others, which Home showed to Blair in Edinburgh. In the next year, 1760, appeared *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language*.

Then, Macpherson went travelling in the Highlands and Western isles, persuaded by 'several people of rank, as well as taste.' The result was the complete epic of *Fingal: an ancient epic poem in six books*, which was published in 1762.

Several gentlemen in the Highlands and isles gave me all the assistance in their power, and it was by their means I was enabled to compleat the epic poem. How far it comes up to the rules of the epopoea, is the province of criticism to examine. It is only my business to lay it before the reader, as I have found it.

In the *Fingal* volume was also published among shorter pieces *Temora, an epic poem*: 'little more than the opening' is Macpherson's note. But, in 1763, this poem, too, was completed, in eight books.

The 'advertisement' to *Fingal* states that

there is a design on foot to print the Originals as soon as the translator shall have time to transcribe them for the press; and if this publication shall not take place, copies will then be deposited in one of the public libraries, to prevent so ancient a monument of genius from being lost.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Macpherson, from the first, intended to take no more than was convenient from what he knew of Gaelic verse. He did not wish to translate such poems as captain Hector MacIntyre translated for Mr Jonathan Oldbuck. He did not ask for help from Irish scholars. He spoke slightly of the Irish tales of Finn; the traditional name of Finn MacCowl was not good enough, and Macpherson invented the name Fingal; he insisted that Fingal, Ossian, Oscar and all the poems were not merely Scottish but 'Caledonian'; in the glory of Ossian, the Irish have only by courtesy a share. This glory, in Macpherson's mind, was not romantic like the tales of chivalry, but heroic and political, like the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. He might have been content, and he might have been successful, with the purely romantic elements as he found them in Gaelic poems, whether of Scotland or of Ireland. But his fabrications (like those of Geoffrey of Monmouth) are intended to glorify the history of his native country, and Fingal and Oscar (like king Arthur in *The Brut*) are victorious adversaries of Rome. 'Both nations' (Caledonia and Ireland), says Macpherson, 'were almost the same people in the days of that hero'; but they are not equal; and Fingal the Caledonian hero comes to the relief of Ireland against the king of Lochlin, when Cuchullin the Irish champion has been defeated. Macpherson thus provoked Irish scholars and English sceptics equally, and in such a way that Irish scholars were generally cut off from a hearing in England. Johnson did not care

for them; what he asked for was the original Gaelic of the 'epopoea'; this the Irish Ossianic poems were not, and they were rejected by Macpherson himself. They would have exploded his history, and, with it, his epic scaffolding. Fingal, conqueror of the Romans, and Ossian, rival of Homer, had become necessary to Macpherson's scheme. And, as a literary man, Macpherson was right—amazingly clever in his selections and rejections and in the whole frame of his policy, so far as it was intended to catch the greatest number of readers. Romance is to be found there in its two chief modes—superficial variety of scenes, and the opposite mode of intense feeling. There is also enough to conciliate a severer taste, in the motives of national heroism, and in the poet's conformity with the standards of epic. Thus, all sorts of readers were attracted—lovers of antiquity, lovers of romance, hearts of sensibility and those respectable critics who were not ashamed to follow Milton, Dryden and Pope in their devotion to the epic ideal.

Macpherson's literary talent was considerable, and is not limited to his ancient epic poems. Reference will be made elsewhere<sup>1</sup> to his *History of Great Britain, from the Restoration in 1660 to the Accession of the House of Hannover* (1775). In 1773, he had published a prose translation of the *Iliad*, which was not highly appreciated. But it is interesting as an experiment in rhythm and as an attempt to free Homer from English literary conventions. Macpherson died in 1796, in his native Badenoch, in the house which he had built for himself and named 'Belleville'; he was buried in Westminster abbey, at his own request. A Gaelic text, incomplete, was published from his papers in 1807. Klopstock, Herder and Goethe took this publication seriously and tried to discover in it the laws of Caledonian verse. In 1805, Malcolm Laing brought out an edition of Ossian (and of Macpherson's own poems), in which the debts of Macpherson were exposed, with some exaggeration. Scott's article on Laing in *The Edinburgh Review* (1805) reaches most of the conclusions that have been proved by later critical research.

Percy's *Reliques* were much more closely related to the Middle Ages than Ossian was; they revealed the proper medieval treasures of romance and ballad poetry. They are much nearer than the 'runic' poems to what is commonly reckoned medieval. Percy's ballads are also connected with various other tastes—with the liking for Scottish and Irish music which had led to the publication

<sup>1</sup> Chap. XII, *post*.

of Scottish songs in D'Urfey's collection, in *Old English Ballads* 1723—1727, in Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius* and Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany*. But, though there was nothing peculiarly medieval in *Fy, let us all to the Bridal* or in *Cowden Knowes*, the taste for such country songs often went with the taste for 'Gothic' romances.

The famous folio MS which Percy secured from Humphrey Pitt of Shifnal had been compiled with no exclusive regard for any one kind. The book when Percy found it was being treated as waste paper and used for fire-lighting. When it was saved from total destruction, it was still treated with small respect; Percy, instead of copying, tore out the ballad of *King Estmere* as copy for the printers, without saving the original pages. But most of the book is preserved; it has been fully edited by Furnivall and Hales, with assistance from Child and Chappell; what Percy took or left is easily discerned. Ritson, the avenger, followed Percy as he followed Warton, and, in the introduction to his *English Romanceës*, displayed some of Percy's methods, and proved how far his versions were from the original. But Percy was avowedly an improver and restorer. His processes are not those of scrupulous philology, but neither are they such as Macpherson favoured. His three volumes contain what they profess in the title-page:

*Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and other Pieces of our earlier Poets (chiefly of the Lyric kind). Together with some few of later date.*

And there is much greater variety than the title-page offers; to take extreme cases, the *Reliques* include the song against Richard of Almaine and the song on the false traitor Thomas Cromwell, the ballads of *Edom o' Gordon* and *Sir Patrick Spens*, 'Gentle river' from the Spanish, *Old Tom of Bedlam* and *Lilliburlero*, *The Fairies Farewell* by Corbet and *Admiral Hosier's Ghost* by Glover. There are essays on ancient English minstrels, on the metrical romances, on the origin of the English stage, and the metre of *Pierce Plowman's Vision*, covering much of the ground taken later by Warton, and certainly giving a strong impulse to the study of old English poetry. Percy makes a strong and not exaggerated claim for the art of the old poets and, by an analysis of *Libius Disconius*, proves 'their skill in distributing and conducting their fable.' His opinion about early English poetry is worth quoting:

It has happened unluckily, that the antiquaries who have revived the works of our ancient writers have been for the most part men void of taste and genius,

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and therefore have always fastidiously rejected the old poetical Romances, because founded on fictitious or popular subjects, while they have been careful to grub up every petty fragment of the most dull and insipid rhymist, whose merit it was to deform morality, or obscure true history. Should the public encourage the revival of some of those ancient Epic Songs of Chivalry, they would frequently see the rich ore of an Ariosto or a Tasso, tho' buried it may be among the rubbish and dross of barbarous times.

The public did not discourage this revival, and what Percy wanted was carried out by Ritson, Ellis, Scott and their successors. Perhaps the best thing in Percy's criticism is his distinction between the two classes of ballad; the one incorrect, with a romantic wildness, is in contrast to the later, tamer southern class, which is thus accurately described :

The other sort are written in exacter measure, have a low or subordinate correctness, sometimes bordering on the insipid, yet often well adapted to the pathetic.

As an example, Percy refers to *Gernutus* :

In Venice town not long agoe  
A cruel Jew did dwell,  
Which lived all on usurie  
As Italian writers tell.

The difference here noted by Percy is the principal thing in this branch of learning, and it could hardly be explained in better words.

It was through Percy's *Reliques* that the Middle Ages really came to have an influence in modern poetry, and this was an effect far greater than that of Ossian (which was not medieval) or that of *The Castle of Otranto* (which was not poetical). The *Reliques* did not spread one monotonous sentiment like Ossian, or publish a receipt for romantic machinery. What they did may be found in *The Ancient Mariner*, and is acknowledged by the authors of *Lyrical Ballads* :

Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the *Reliques* of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions!—I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the *Reliques*; I know that it is so with my friends; and for myself I am happy on this occasion to make a public avowal of my own (Wordsworth, 1815).

It is strange that there should be so little of *Reliques* in Chatterton. What one misses in the Rowley poems is the irregular verse of the ballads; the freest measures in the Rowley poems are borrowed from Shakespeare; the ballad called the *Bristowe*

*Tragedie* is in Percy's second class, written with 'a low or subordinate correctness sometimes bordering on the insipid,' e.g.

I greeve to telle, before youre sonne  
Does fromme the welkinn flye,  
He hath upon his honour sworne,  
That thou shalt surelie die.

The real master of Chatterton is Spenser. Chatterton had a perfect command of the heroic line as it was then commonly used in couplets; he preferred the stanza, however, and almost always a stanza with an alexandrine at the end. He had learned much from *The Castle of Indolence*, but he does not remain content with the eighteenth century Spenserians; he goes back to the original. A technical variation of Chatterton's is proof of this: whereas the eighteenth century imitators of *The Faerie Queene* cut their alexandrines at the sixth syllable regularly, Chatterton is not afraid to turn over:

Tell him I scorne to kenne hem from afar,  
Botte leave the vyrgyn bryddall bedde for bedde of warre.  
(*Ælla*, l. 347.)

And cries a guerre and slughornes shake the vaulted heaven.  
(*Hastings* 2, l. 190.)

And like to them æternal alwaie stryve to be. (*Ibid.* l. 380.)

In following Spenser, he sometimes agrees with Milton: thus, *Elinoure and Juga* and the *Excelente Balade of Charitie* are in Milton's seven line stanza (rime royal, with the seventh line an alexandrine), thus:

*Juga*: Systers in sorrowe, on thys daise-ey'd banke,  
Where melancholych brooda, we wyll lamente;  
Be wette wythe mornynge dewe and evene darke;  
Lyche levynde okes in eche the odher bente,  
Or lyche forlettenn halles of merriemente  
Whose gastlie mitches holde the traine of fryghte  
Where lethale ravens bark, and owlets wake the nyghte.

*Elinoure*: No moe the miskynette shall wake the morne  
The minstrelle daunce, good cheere, and mornyce plaie;  
No moe the amblynge palfrie and the horne  
Shall from the lessel rouze the foxe awaie;  
I'll seke the foreste alle the lyve-longe daie;  
All nete amonge the gravde chyrche glebe wyll goe,  
And to the passante Spryghtes lecture mie tale of woe.

In the *Songe to Ælla*, again, there are measures from Milton's *Ode*:

Orr whare thou kennst fromm farre  
• The dysmall crye of warre,  
Orr seest some mountayne made of corse of sleyme.

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The poems attributed to Thomas Rowley are Elizabethan, where they are not later, in style; the spelling is freely imitated from the worst fifteenth century practice; the vocabulary is taken largely from Speght's glossary to Chaucer, from Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (1708) and Bailey's *Universal Etymological Dictionary* (1737). Chatterton does not seem to have cared much for Chaucer except as an authority for old words; he studied the glossary, not the text, and does not imitate Chaucer's phrasing. His poetry and his medieval tastes are distinct; his poetry is not medieval, and his medieval fictions (like those of Scott, to a great extent) are derived from admiration of the life and manners, from architecture and heraldry, from the church of St Mary Redcliffe, from the black-letter Bible in which he learned to read, and from the appearance of the old parchments which his father took from Canynge's coffin in the neglected muniment room of the church. His grandfather and great-grandfather had been sextons there, and the church was the ancestral home of his imagination, 'the pride of Brystowe and the Westernne lande.' The child made an imaginary Bristol of the fifteenth century, with personages who were seen moving about in it and distinctly known to him; the childhood of Sordello in Browning's poem is the same sort of life as Chatterton's. As he grew out of childhood and became a poet with a mastery of verse, he still kept up his fictitious world; his phantom company was not dispersed by his new poetical knowledge and skill, but was employed by him to utter his new poetry, although this was almost wholly at variance with the assumed age and habit of Thomas Rowley and his acquaintances. The Rowley poems are not an imitation of fifteenth century English verse; they are new poetry of the eighteenth century, keeping wisely, but not tamely, to the poetical conventions of the time, the tradition of heroic verse—with excursions, like those of Blake, into the poetry of Shakespeare's songs, and one remarkable experiment (noted by Watts-Dunton) in the rhythm of *Christabel*, with likeness to Scott and Byron:

Then each did don in seemlie gear,  
What armour eche beseem'd to wear,  
And on each sheeldē devices shone  
Of wounded hearts and battles won,  
All curious and nice echon;  
With many a tassild spear.

But this, *The Unknown Knight* (which is not in the early editions of the Rowley poems), is an accident. Chatterton had here for

a moment hit on one kind of verse which was destined to live in the next generation ; but neither in the principal Rowley poems nor in those avowedly his own does he show any sense of what he had found or any wish to use again this new invention.

Thomas Chatterton was born in November 1752, and put to school at Colston's hospital when he was nine ; in 1765, he was apprenticed to a Bristol attorney. In April 1770, his master released him, and he came to London to try his fortune as an author and journalist. He had been a contributor to magazines for some time before he left home, and possessed very great readiness in different kinds of popular writing. He got five guineas for a short comic opera, *The Revenge* (humours of Olympus), and seems to have wanted nothing but time to establish a good practice as a literary man. He does not seem to have made any mistake in judging his own talents ; he could do efficiently the sort of work which he professed. But he had come to a point of bad luck, and his pride and ambition would not allow him to get over the difficulty by begging or sponging ; so he killed himself (24 August 1770).

The nature of his impostures is now fairly well ascertained. They began in his childhood as pure invention and imaginary life ; they turned to schoolboy practical joking (the solemn bookish schoolboy who pretends to a knowledge of magic or Hebrew is a wellknown character) ; then, later, came more elaborate jokes, to impose upon editors—*Saxon Achievements* is irresistible—and, then, the attempt to take in Horace Walpole with *The Ryse of Peyncteyning in Englande writen by T. Rowleie 1469 for Mastre Canynge*, a fraud very properly refused by Walpole. The Rowley poems were written with all those motives mixed ; but of fraud there was clearly less in them than in the document for the history of painting, because the poems are good value, whatever their history may be, whereas the document is only meant to deceive and is otherwise not specially amusing.

Chatterton was slightly influenced by Macpherson, and seems to have decided that the Caledonians were not to have all the profits of heroic melancholy to themselves. He provided translations of Saxon poems :

The loud winds whistled through the sacred grove of Thor ; far over the plains of Denania were the cries of the spirits heard. The howl of Hubba's horrid voice swelled upon every blast, and the shrill shriek of the fair Locabara shot through the midnight sky.

There is some likeness between Macpherson and Chatterton in their acknowledged works : Macpherson, in his poems *The Hunter*

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and *The Highlander*, has great fluency with the heroic verse, and in prose of different sorts he was a capable writer. The difference is that Chatterton was a poet, with every variety of music, seemingly, at his command, and with a mind that could project itself in a hundred different ways—a true shaping mind. Nothing in Chatterton's life is more wonderful than his impersonality; he does not make poetry out of his pains or sorrows, and, when he is composing verse, he seems to have escaped from himself. His dealing with common romantic scenery and sentiment is shown in the quotation above from *Elinoure and Juga*; he makes a poetical use of melancholy motives, himself untouched, or, at any rate, undeluded.

The Wartons were devoted to the Middle Ages through their appreciation of Gothic architecture. It began with Thomas Warton the elder, who let his sons Joseph and Thomas understand what he himself admired in Windsor and Winchester. But, as with Chatterton, and even with Scott, an admiration of the Middle Ages need not lead to a study of medieval philology, though it did so in the case of Thomas the younger. In literature, a taste for the Middle Ages generally meant, first of all, a taste for Spenser, for Elizabethans—old poetry, but not too old. Thomas Warton the father was made professor of poetry at Oxford in 1718, and deserved it for his praise of the neglected early poems of Milton. It was indirectly from Warton that Pope got his knowledge of *Comus* and *Il Penseroso*. Warton's own poems, published by his son Thomas in 1748, contain some rather amazing borrowings from Milton's volume of 1645; his paraphrase of Temple's quotation from Olaus Wormius has been already mentioned. The younger Thomas had his father's tastes and proved this in his work on Spenser, his edition of Milton's *Poems upon several occasions* and his projected history of Gothic architecture, as well as in his history of English poetry. His life, well written by Richard Mant, is a perfect example of the easy-going university man, such as is also well represented in the famous miscellany which Warton himself edited, *The Oxford Sausage*. Warton was a tutor of Trinity, distinguished even at that time for neglect of his pupils and for a love of ale, tobacco, low company and of going to see a man hanged. His works are numerous<sup>1</sup>; his poems in a collected edition were published in 1791, the year after his death. He was professor of poetry 1757 to 1767, Camden professor

<sup>1</sup> See bibliography.

of history from 1785 and poet laureate in the same year. His appointment was celebrated by the *Probationary Odes* attached to *The Rolliad*.

The advertisement to Warton's *Poems* (1791) remarks that the author was 'of the school of Spenser and Milton, rather than that of Pope.' The old English poetry which he studied and described in his history had not much direct influence on his own compositions; the effect of his mediæval researches was not to make him an imitator of the Middle Ages, but to give him a wider range in modern poetry. Study of the Middle Ages implied freedom from many common literary prejudices, and, with Warton, as with Gray and Chatterton and others, the freedom of poetry and of poetical study was the chief thing; metrical romances, Chaucer and Gower, Lydgate and Gawain Douglas, led, usually, not to a revival of mediæval forms, but to a quickening of interest in Spenser and Milton. Nor was the school of Pope renounced or dishonoured in consequence of Warton's 'Gothic' taste; he uses the regular couplet to describe his mediæval studies:

Long have I loved to catch the simple chime  
Of minstrel-harps, and spell the fabling rime;  
To view the festive rites, the knightly play,  
That deck'd heroic Albion's elder day;  
To mark the mouldering halls of barons bold,  
And the rough castle, cast in giant mould;  
With Gothic manners Gothic arts explore  
And muse on the magnificence of yore<sup>1</sup>.

Thomas Warton's freedom of admiration does not make him disrespectful to the ordinary canons of literary taste; he does not go so far as his brother Joseph. He is a believer in the dignity of general terms, which was disparaged by his brother; this is a fair test of conservative literary opinion in the eighteenth century.

The *History of English Poetry* (in three volumes, 1774, 1778, 1781) was severely criticised; not only, as by Ritson, for inaccuracy, but, even more severely, for incoherence. Scott is merciless on this head:

As for the late laureate, it is well known that he never could follow a clue of any kind. With a head abounding in multifarious lore, and a mind unquestionably imbued with true poetic fire, he wielded that most fatal of all implements to its possessor, a pen so scaturient and unretentive, that we think he must have been often astonished not only at the extent of his lucubrations, but at their total and absolute want of connection with the subject he had assigned to himself<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Verses on Sir Joshua Reynolds's painted window at New College, Oxford: 1782.

<sup>2</sup> See Scott's art. on Todd's *Spenser*, in *The Edinburgh Review*, 1805.

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This does not make allowance enough, either for the difficulties of Warton's explorations or for the various purposes of literary history. Warton certainly had no gift for historical construction. But the art of Gibbon is not required for every history, and the history of literature can spare a coherent plan, so long as the historian provides such plenty of samples as Warton always gives. Obviously, in literature, the separate facts may be interesting and intelligible, while the bare facts of political history can but rarely be such. The relation of book to book is not like the relation of one battle to another in the same war, or of one political act to the other events of a king's reign. In literary history, desultory reading and writing need not be senseless or useless; and Warton's work has and retains an interest and value which will outlast many ingenious writings of critics more thoroughly disciplined. Further, his biographer Mant has ground for his opinion (contrary to Scott's) that Warton

can trace the progress of the mind, not merely as exemplified in the confined exertions of an individual, but in a succession of ages, and in the pursuits and acquirements of a people.

There is more reasoning and more coherence in Warton's history than Scott allows.

Joseph Warton did not care for the Middle Ages as his brother did, but he saw more clearly than Thomas how great a poet Dante was; 'perhaps the *Inferno* of Dante is the next composition to the *Iliad*, in point of originality and sublimity<sup>1</sup>.' The footnote here ('Milton was particularly fond of this writer' etc.) shows, by its phrasing, how little known Dante was at that time to the English reading public. Though Joseph Warton was not a medievalist like Thomas, he had that appreciation of Spenser and Milton which was the chief sign and accompaniment of medieval studies in England. His judgment of Pope and of modern poetry agrees with the opinion expressed by Hurd in his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762: six years after the first part of Joseph Warton's *Essay*, eight years after Thomas Warton on *The Faerie Queene*).

What we have gotten by this revolution, you will say, is a great deal of good sense. What we have lost, is a world of fine fabling; the illusion of which is so grateful to the *Charmed Spirit* that in spite of philosophy and fashion *Faery* Spenser still ranks highest among the Poets; I mean with all those who are either come of that house, or have any kindness for it.

Hurd's *Letters* are the best explanation of the critical view which saw the value of romance—'the Gothic fables of chivalry'—without

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on Pope*, sect. v.

any particular knowledge of old French or much curiosity about any poetry older than Ariosto. Not medieval poetry, but medieval customs and sentiments, were interesting; and so Hurd and many others who were tired of the poetry of good sense looked on Ariosto, Tasso and Spenser as the true poets of the medieval heroic age. It should be observed that the age of 'good sense' was not slow to appreciate 'the fairy way of writing'—the phrase is Dryden's, and Addison made it a text for one of his essays on Imagination.

At the same time as Thomas Warton, another Oxford man, Tyrwhitt of Merton, was working at old English poetry. He edited the *Rowley* poems. His *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer* and his *Introductory Discourse to the Canterbury Tales* ('printed before Mr Warton's book was published') are the complement of Warton's work. Warton is not very careful about prosody; his observations on the stanza of *The Faerie Queene* are dull and inaccurate. Tyrwhitt was interested in the history of verse, as Gray had been, and, from his grammatical knowledge and critical sense, he made out the rule of Chaucer's heroic verse which had escaped notice for nearly 400 years. No other piece of medieval scholarship in England can be compared with Tyrwhitt's in importance. Chaucer was popularly known, but known as an old barbarous author with plenty of good sense and no art of language. The pieces of Chaucer printed at the end of Dryden's *Fables* show what doggerel passed for Chaucer's verse, even with the finest judges, before Tyrwhitt found out the proper music of the line, mainly by getting the value of the *e* mute, partly by attending to the change of accent.

Tyrwhitt is the restorer of Chaucer. Though the genius of Dryden had discovered the classical spirit of Chaucer's imagination, the form of his poetry remained obscure and defaced till Tyrwhitt explained the rule of his heroic line and brought out the beauty of it. The art of the grammarian has seldom been better justified and there are few things in English philology more notable than Tyrwhitt's edition of Chaucer.

## CHAPTER XI

### LETTER-WRITERS

#### I

HORACE WALPOLE is generally acknowledged as 'the prince of letter-writers,' and he is certainly entitled to this high literary rank in consideration of the extent and supreme value of his correspondence. Byron styled Walpole's letters 'incomparable,' and all who know them must agree in this high praise. English literature is particularly rich in the number and excellence of its letter-writers; but no other of the class has dealt with so great a variety of subjects as Walpole. His letters were, indeed, the chief work of his life.

As the beauty of the art largely depends on the spontaneity of the writers in the expression of their natural feelings, it would be futile to attempt to decide the relative merits of the great letter-writers in order to award the palm to the foremost or greatest of the class. We should be grateful for the treasures bequeathed to us and refrain from appraising their respective deserts. To weigh the golden words of such gracious spirits as Gray, Cowper or Charles Lamb, in order to decide which of them possesses the highest value, seems a labour unworthy of them all. Sincerity is the primary claim upon our respect and esteem for great writers of letters; and the lack of this rules out the letters of Pope from the place in literature to which they would otherwise be entitled. Now, in spite of the cruel criticism of Macaulay, we have no hesitation in claiming sincerity as a characteristic of Walpole's letters.

Walpole lives now and always will live in public esteem as a great letter-writer; but he was also himself a distinguished figure during his lifetime. Thus, his name attained to a fame which, in later years, has been considerably dimmed, partly by the instability which reflects itself in his writings, and, also, by the virulent censure to which he has been subjected by some critics of

distinction. Macaulay's complete indictment of Horace Walpole as a man has left him with scarcely a rag of character. The charges brought against him are, however, so wholesale that the condemnation may be said to carry with it its own antidote; for it is not a mere caricature, but one almost entirely opposed to truth. To many of these unjust charges, any candid review of Walpole's career in its many aspects, exhibiting him as a man of quality, a brilliant wit, both in conversation and in writing, an author of considerable mark, a connoisseur of distinction and a generous and ready friend, will form a sufficient answer. A fuller reply, however, is required to those accusations which touch his honour and social conduct through life. Macaulay speaks of Walpole's 'faults of head and heart,' of his 'unhealthy and disorganised mind,' of his disguise from the world 'by mask upon mask,' adding that 'whatever was little seemed great to him, and whatever was great seemed to him little.' Now, Walpole placed himself so often at his reader's mercy, and, occasionally, was so perverse in his actions as to make it necessary for those who admire his character to show that, though he had many transparent faults, his life was guided by honourable principles, and that, though not willing to stand forth as a censor of mankind, he could clearly distinguish between the great and little things of life and, when a duty was clear to him, had strength to follow the call. His affectation no one would wish to deny; but, although this is an objectionable quality, it can scarcely be treated as criminal. In fact, Walpole began life with youthful enthusiasm and with an eager love of friends, but soon adopted a shield of fine-gentlemanly pretence, in order to protect his own feelings.

Horatio Walpole was born at the house of his father (Sir Robert Walpole) in Arlington street, on 24 September 1717. After two years of study with a tutor, he went to Eton in April 1727, where he remained until the spring of 1735, when he entered at King's college, Cambridge. He had many fast Etonian friends, and we hear of two small circles—'the triumvirate,' consisting of George and Charles Montagu and Walpole, and 'the quadruple alliance,' namely, Gray, West, Ashton and Walpole<sup>1</sup>. He left the university in 1739, and, on 10 March, set off on the grand tour with Gray, of which some account has already been given in this volume<sup>2</sup>. Of the quarrel between them, Walpole took the whole blame upon himself; but, probably, Gray was also at fault. Both kept silence as to the cause, and the only authentic particulars are to be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. vi, p. 117, *ante*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.* pp. 118—119.

found in Walpole's letter<sup>1</sup> to Mason, who was then writing the life of Gray—a letter which does the greatest credit to Walpole's heart. The friendship was renewed after three years and continued through life; but it was not what it had been at first, though Walpole's appreciation of the genius of Gray was always of the strongest and of the most enthusiastic character.

After Gray left Walpole at Reggio, the latter passed through a serious illness. His life was probably saved by the prompt action of Joseph Spence (who was travelling with Lord Lincoln), in summoning a famous Italian physician who, with the aid of Spence's own attentive nursing, brought the illness to a successful end. Walpole, when convalescent, continued his journey with Lord Lincoln and Spence; but, having been elected member of parliament for Callington in Cornwall at the general election, he left his companions and landed at Dover, 12 September 1741. He changed his seat several times, but continued in parliament until 1768, when he retired from the representation of Lynn. He was observant of his duties, and a regular attendant at long sittings, his descriptions of which are of great interest. On 23 March 1742, he spoke for the first time in the House, against the motion for the appointment of a secret committee on his father. According to his own account, his speech 'was published in the Magazines, but was entirely false, and had not one paragraph of my real speech in it.' On 11 January 1751, he moved the address to the king at the opening of the session; but the most remarkable incident in his parliamentary career was his quarrel, in 1747, with the redoubtable speaker Onslow. More to his credit were his strenuous endeavours to save the life of the unfortunate admiral Byng.

The turning-point of his life was the acquisition of Strawberry hill. The building of the house, the planning of the gardens and the collection of his miscellaneous artistic curiosities soon became of absorbing interest to Walpole. Much might be said of him as a connoisseur; his taste has been strongly condemned; but, although he often made much of what was not of great importance, he gradually collected works of enduring value, and the dispersion of his property in 1842 came to be regarded as a historical event<sup>2</sup>. Judge Hardinge was just when he wrote: 'In his taste for architecture and vertu there were both whims and foppery, but still with fancy and genius<sup>3</sup>.' The opening of the private press in

<sup>1</sup> 2 March 1778.

<sup>2</sup> The contents of Strawberry hill realised £33,450. 11s. 9d., and would be valued now at many times that amount.

<sup>3</sup> Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. VIII, p. 525.

1757, the *Officina Arbuteana* or the *Elzevirianum*, as he called it, also, gave Walpole, with much additional work, a great deal of pleasure. He was enabled to print his light verses and present them to his distinguished visitors, and could make preparations for the printing of his projected works. Conway called his cousin 'Elzevir Horace.' Walpole was very proud to be able to begin the work of his press by printing two unpublished odes by Gray<sup>1</sup>.

Walpole's head was so full of Strawberry hill, and he mentioned it so frequently in his letters, that he sent a particular description to Mann (12 June 1753) with a drawing by Richard Bentley, 'for it is uncomfortable in so intimate a correspondence as ours not to be exactly master of every spot where one another is writing reading or sauntering.' He frequently produced guides to the 'Castle'; but the fullest and final one is the *Description of the Villa* printed in 1784, and illustrated by many interesting plates. Walpole was very generous in allowing visitors to see his house; but these visitors were often very inconsiderate, and broke the rules he made. He wrote to George Montagu (3 September 1763):

My house is full of people and has been so from the instant I breakfasted, and more are coming—in short I keep an inn: the sign 'The Gothic Castle.' Since my gallery was finished I have not been in it a quarter of an hour together; my whole time is passed in giving tickets for seeing it and hiding myself while it is seen.

In December 1791, Horace Walpole succeeded his nephew as earl of Orford. The prodigality, and then the madness, of the third earl forced his uncle to take upon himself the duties of a man of business, in order to keep the estate from dissolution. He had to undertake the management of the family estate, because there was no one else inclined to act. When he had put things into a better state, the earl's sudden return to sanity threw everything into confusion again, as he was surrounded by a gang of sharpers. Horace Walpole developed unexpected business qualities, and,

<sup>1</sup> They were published by Dodsley, out of whose hands the MS was 'snatched' by Walpole, in the presence of Gray. Several works of interest were printed at the press, such as Hentzner's *Journey into England* (a charming little book), *Mémoires de Grammont*, *The Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, etc., and several of Walpole's own works. A bibliography of the Strawberry hill books is given by Austin Dobson as an appendix to his *Horace Walpole, a Memoir*. The output of the press was highly satisfactory, considering that the whole staff consisted of a man and a boy. In a letter to Sir David Dalrymple (23 February 1764), Walpole makes some peevish remarks about his press: 'The plague I have had in every shape with my own printing, engravers, the booksellers, etc., besides my own trouble, have almost discouraged me from what I took up at first as an amusement, but which has produced very little of it.'

according to his own account, was able to reduce the mismanaged estate to order and solvency.

In April 1777, the nephew went mad again ; and, on his recovery, in 1778, the uncle gave up the care of him. He was subjected to continual anxiety during the remainder of his nephew's life ; but he did not again take charge of the estate. When he himself came into the property, there was little left to manage. The picture gallery at Houghton, which Horace greatly loved, was sold to the empress Catharine II of Russia ; and, before Lord Orford died, in December 1791, he had become practically bankrupt. Horace Walpole had thus to take up an earldom which had fallen on evil days. He was not likely, in his old age, to accept with pleasure a title whose credit he could not hope to retrieve. He refused to enter the House of Lords ; but, however much he might wish to do so, he could not relieve himself of the title<sup>1</sup>. He died on 2 March 1797, at the house in Berkeley square to which he had moved from Arlington street.

A rapid glance through Walpole's correspondence will soon reveal to us the secret of his life, which explains much for which he has been condemned. The moving principle of his conduct through life was love for, and pride in, his father. It is well, therefore, to insist upon the serious purpose of much of Horace's career, and to call to mind how signally his outlook upon affairs was influenced by the proceedings of his family. He was proud of its antiquity and of its history from the conquest downwards ; but he knew that no man of mark had emerged from it until his father came to do honour to his race ; so, with that father, the pride of his son began and ended. Sir Robert Walpole's enemies were his son's, and those of the family who disgraced their name were obnoxious to him in consequence. In a time of great laxity, Margaret, countess of Orford, wife of the second earl, became specially notorious, and the disgracefulness of her conduct was a constant source of disgust to him. His elder brother Robert, the second earl, was little of a friend, and mention has already been made of the misconduct of his nephew George, the third earl (who succeeded to the title in 1751 and held it for forty years).

<sup>1</sup> There is some misapprehension as to this. Within a few days of the death of his nephew, Walpole subscribed a letter to the duke of Bedford—'The Uncle of the late Earl of Orford'; but he did not refuse to sign himself 'Orford,' although Pinkerton printed in *Walpoliana* a letter dated 26 December 1791, signed 'Hor. Walpole'—but this was an answer to a letter of congratulation from Pinkerton himself on the succession, the advantages of which Walpole denied.

The public came slowly into possession of Walpole's great literary bequest. A series of *Miscellaneous Letters* was published in 1778 as the fifth volume of the collected edition of his *Works*. In 1818, *Letters to George Montagu* followed, and, in subsequent years, other series appeared<sup>1</sup>. The first collected edition of *Private Correspondence* was published in 1820, and a fuller edition in 1840. But the reading world had to wait until 1857 for a fairly complete edition of the letters arranged in chronological order. This, edited in nine volumes by Peter Cunningham with valuable notes, held its own as the standard edition, until Mrs Paget Toynbee's largely augmented edition appeared. The supply of Walpole's letters seems to be well-nigh inexhaustible, and a still fuller collection will, probably, appear in its turn.

We have here a body of important material which forms both an autobiography and a full history of sixty years of the eighteenth century. Although the letters contain Walpole's opinions on events as they occurred day by day, he communicated them to his different correspondents from varied points of view. It is a remarkable fact, which proves the orderly and constructive character of the writer's mind, that the entire collection of the letters, ranging over a very long period, forms a well connected whole, with all the appearance of having been systematically planned.

The first letter we possess is to 'My dearest Charles' (C. Lyttelton), and was written when Walpole was fifteen years of age (7 August 1732). In it he says :

I can reflect with great joy on the moments we passed together at Eton, and long to talk 'em over, as I think we could recollect a thousand passages which were something above the common rate of schoolboy's diversions.

In the last known letter from his hand<sup>2</sup>, written to the countess of Upper Ossory, to protest against her showing his 'idle notes' to others, Walpole refers to his fourscore nephews and nieces of various ages, who are brought to him about once a year to stare at him 'as the Methusalem of the family.' He wants no laurels :

I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me, when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust. Till then pray Madam accept the resignation of your ancient servant, Orford.

The same spirit runs through the entire correspondence. It constantly displays his affectionate feelings towards his friends and the lightness with which he is able to touch on his own misfortunes. Throughout his life, he was troubled by 'invalidity'; yet he could repudiate any claim to patience, and ask Mann (8 January 1786)

<sup>1</sup> See bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> 16 January 1797.

if people of easy fortunes cannot bear illness with temper what are the poor to do, who have none of our alleviations? The affluent, I fear, do not consider what a benefit ticket has fallen to their lot, out of millions not so fortunate; yet less do they reflect that chance, not merit, drew the prize out of the wheel.

He suffered from gout throughout his life; but he always made light of the affliction. He told Mason (Christmas day 1779) that he had had a relapse, though a slight one, and 'called it only a codicil to my gout. Mr Gibbon said "very well; but I fancy it is not in consequence of your *will*."' There was no mistake about the reality of his attacks; for chalk-stones were continually breaking out from his fingers, and he told Lady Ossory that, if he could not wait upon her, he hoped she would have the charity 'to come and visit the chalk-pits in Berkeley Square.'

Walpole studied letter-writing as an art and understood its distinctive features. There is no violent change in his style from beginning to end of his correspondence; but a gradual growth may be observed in his artistic treatment of his matter. He could criticise other letter-writers with judgment and good taste; but there was one, above all, who was only to be worshipped, and that was Madame de Sévigné. He tells Richard Bentley<sup>1</sup> that

My Lady Hervey has made me most happy by bringing me from Paris an admirable copy of the very portrait [of Mme de Sévigné] that was Madame de Simiane's [her granddaughter]. I am going to build an altar for it, under the title of *Notre Dame des Rochers*!

Walpole addresses the same Lady Hervey from Paris (8 October 1765) to the effect that he had called upon Madame Chabot.

She was not at home, but the Hotel de Carnavalet was; and I stopped on purpose to say an *Ave Maria* before it. It is a very singular building, not at all in the French style, and looks like an *ex voto* raised to her honour by some of her votaries [Mme de Sévigné's]. I don't think her honoured half enough in her own country<sup>2</sup>.

Mrs Toynbee's edition contains a total of three thousand and sixty-one letters, addressed by Walpole to one hundred and sixty

<sup>1</sup> 24 December 1754.

<sup>2</sup> This interesting old house is now well known as the home of the Carnavalet museum. Eleven years after this, Madame Du Deffand teased Walpole by sending him a snuffbox with a portrait of Mme de Sévigné copied from one he greatly admired. This was sent with a letter signed 'Rabutin de Sévigné' and beginning thus: '*Je connois votre folle passion pour moi; votre enthousiasme pour mes lettres, votre vénération pour les lieux que j'ai habités.*' In acknowledging the gift from judge Hardinge of four drawings of the *château de Grignan*, in a letter dated 4 July 1779, Walpole wrote: 'I own that Grignan is grander, and in a much finer situation than I had imagined; as I concluded the witchery of Madame de Sévigné's ideas and style had spread the same leaf-gold over places with which she gilded her friends.' (See Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. viii, p. 536.)

correspondents, many of them men and women of mark. The number of letters to some of these personages are very few, but among them are seven, to each of whom over one hundred letters were written by him. Sir Horace Mann heads the list with 820, then comes the countess of Upper Ossory with 400. The other five have smaller numbers, as George Montagu 263, William Mason 217, William Cole 180, Henry Conway 179 and Mary Berry 159. The lifelong correspondence with Mann exhibits a unique instance of friendship, maintained without personal intercourse for forty-five years. Walpole might well say to his friend (4 December 1785), 'You and I have long out-friendshipped Orestes and Pylades.'

Mann was an early friend of Walpole, and his appointment in 1737 as assistant to Charles Fane (afterwards second viscount Fane), envoy extraordinary at the court of Florence, by Sir Robert Walpole, was entirely owing to this intimacy. In 1740, Mann became Fane's successor, and Walpole visited him at Florence in the same year. After returning to England in September 1741, Walpole never saw his friend again. Mann never left Italy, although, in 1755, he succeeded his elder brother in the possession of the family estate at Linton, Kent. His chief duties were to look after the two 'pretenders' and to entertain distinguished English travellers in Italy. He was kept informed by Walpole of all that was going on in England, and he returned the favour by writing continuously in reply, though, it must be said, giving Walpole lead in return for his gold<sup>1</sup>. It should, however, not be overlooked, that, when writing to Mann and other friends abroad, Walpole always feared the opening of his letters at the post office. He complains to the earl of Hertford<sup>2</sup>:

As my letters are seldom proper for the post now I begin them at any time, and am forced to trust to chance for a conveyance. This difficulty renders my news very stale.

Walpole, writing to Lady Ossory<sup>3</sup>, praised women as far better letter-writers than men. When he wrote 'I could lay down as an infallible truth in the words of my god-father, *Pennis non homini datis*, the English of which is, "It was not given to *man* to write letters,"' it is just possible that it occurred to him how the dictum might apply to his friend Mann. Some of Walpole's best letters

<sup>1</sup> Peter Cunningham described Mann's letters as 'utterly unreadable.' A selection of them was published by Doran in 1876, under the irritating title *Mann and Manners at the Court of Florence*.

<sup>2</sup> 8 August 1764.

<sup>3</sup> Christmas day 1773.

were addressed to his frequent correspondent Lady Ossory. Mary Berry would have stood higher in the numerical list; but Walpole did not become intimate with her and her father and sister until late in his life (in the winter of 1788). Madame Du Deffand's letters to Walpole were first printed by Miss Berry and afterwards reprinted in Paris<sup>1</sup>. A complete edition of these letters, edited by the late Mrs Toynbee, was published in 1912. Walpole's letters to Madame Du Deffand were burnt at his particular request. It is supposed that he did not wish them to be published, lest his French should be criticised. He wrote to Mason<sup>2</sup>: 'Mme Du Deffand has told me that I speak French worse than any Englishman she knows.' A little too much has been made of Walpole's gallicisms, although there certainly is a remarkable one in the preface to *Historic Doubts on Richard III*:

It is almost a question whether if the dead of past ages could revive, they would be able to *reconnoitre*<sup>3</sup> the events of their own times as transmitted to us.

Thomas Pitt, first Lord Camelford (nephew of the great Chatham), writing to judge Hardinge in 1789, refers to the translation of Walpole's *Essay on Gardening* by the duc de Nivernais:

I shall be glad to see the work of M. de Nivernois, if it answers at all to the specimens you have sent me. The truth is that, as Mr Horace Walpole always thinks in French he ought never to write in English; and I dare be sworn Nivernois' translation will appear the more original work of the two<sup>4</sup>.

Did Hannah More venture to 'chaff' Walpole when she sent him anonymously a clever letter dated 'Alamode Castle, June 20, 1840' and headed it 'A Specimen of the English language, as it will be written and spoken in the next century. In a letter from a lady to her friend in the reign of George V'? Walpole acknowledged this letter (5 April 1785) with cordiality and much praise, to show that 'his withers were unwrung.' Walpole expressed to Lady Ossory (Christmas day 1781) his opinion that 'Letters ought to be nothing but extempore conversation upon paper,' and, doubtless, his conversation was much like his letters, and as excellent. His wit was ready and brilliant in both forms of communication. He was himself proud of the witty apophthegm which he seems to have first imparted to Mann by word of mouth:

Recollect what I have said to you, that this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel. This is the quintessence of all I have learnt in fifty years<sup>5</sup>!

<sup>1</sup> See bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> 5 July 1773.

<sup>3</sup> This use of the word 'reconnoitre' in English was quite obsolete in Walpole's day.

<sup>4</sup> Nichols's *Literary Illustrations*, vol. vii, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> 5 March 1773.

At any rate, the saying has found its way into books of familiar quotations.

Numerous instances might be given of the value of the letters in illustration of history ; but, in spite of the popular notion as to the frivolity of a large part of their contents, it may safely be said that matters of moment are dealt with throughout the series, and sidelights are to be found on every page. There is, first, the Jacobite rising of 1745. Then, we have the trials of the Jacobites, and, for a time, there is peace, broken by the excitement of Wilkes's publication of *The North Briton* and subsequent riots. Walpole was attacked in no. 2 of *The North Briton* ; and Wilkes was annoyed that he did not seem to mind the attack. In a letter to Mann<sup>1</sup>, Walpole laments the state of the nation, and, after giving instances of the grievous increase of gambling, he writes 'We are not a great age, but surely we are tending to some great revolution.' The American war was the next great event to supply Walpole with material for invective and complaints of bad government. At the end of his life came the great convulsion of the French revolution and, in September 1789, he congratulated Hannah More on the demolition of the Bastille, the reform of which he related fourteen years before<sup>2</sup>. The enormities of the revolutionaries changed his political views, as they did those of the majority of Englishmen, and he welcomed with enthusiasm Burke's *Reflections*. He said that it painted the queen 'exactly as she appeared to me the first time I saw her when Dauphiness<sup>3</sup>.'

Many of Walpole's anecdotes are valuable as illustrations of the manners of the time and contain information not to be found elsewhere ; but the chief interest of his correspondence remains autobiographical. The first hundred pages of Mrs Toynbee's edition contain letters, from 1732 to 1741, to Charles Lyttelton, Gray, West, George Montagu, Thomas Ashton and Henry Conway, for the most part written during Walpole's travels. The first letter to Mann was written on 11 September 1741. From this time, the complete autobiography may be said to begin, and it continues to the end. Walpole wrote an interesting advertisement prefixed to the *Letters to Mann*, explaining his reasons for preserving them, which is too long to quote here, but will be found in a note to the first letter. For the incidents of his early life we must search

<sup>1</sup> 4 February 1770.

<sup>2</sup> 25 October 1775.

<sup>3</sup> See, also, his anecdote of Marie-Antoinette as queen, in his letter to Mary Berry, 8 July 1790.

elsewhere, and he has left us the main particulars in the *Short Notes of My Life*.

Walpole's character may be easily understood by anyone who studies his correspondence. In early life, he was not very different from a large number of the highbred men of the eighteenth century who took pride in their social position, for it is necessary to remember that there were two classes of men in the English society of this age—the jovial and the coarse, and the reserved and refined. Sir Robert Walpole belonged to the former, and his son Horace to the latter. Horace was never very young, and his father said of himself that he was the younger of the two. Horace adds<sup>1</sup>: 'Indeed I think so in spite of his forty years more.' The son began life with a character for frankness and enthusiasm; but, as he grew into the cynical man of the world, he became colder in manner to mere acquaintances, reserving his true self only for his bosom friends. He cultivated an extreme fastidiousness and severe refinement, which caused him to exhibit a distaste for a robust humour that he considered vulgar. This powerful prejudice caused him to propound much absurd criticism. He could not admire Fielding because he kept 'low company,' and condemned the 'vulgarity of his character.' For the beautiful and pathetic *Voyage to Lisbon* he could find no praise, and he refers to 'Fielding's Travels or rather an account of how his dropsy was treated,' and how he was teased by an innkeeper's wife in the Isle of Wight<sup>2</sup>. He could not appreciate the genius of Richardson and refers to

those tedious lamentations—*Clarissa*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*, which are pictures of high life as conceived by a bookseller, and romances as they would be spiritualised by a Methodist preacher<sup>3</sup>.

Sterne was no more fortunate in obtaining the good opinion of Walpole, who writes to Henry Zouch:

The second and third volumes of *Tristram Shandy*, the dregs of nonsense, have universally met the contempt they deserve: genius may be exhausted;—I see that folly's invention may be so too<sup>4</sup>.

He could appreciate Johnson's great qualities; but he was repelled by his roughness. He said wittily:

Johnson made the most brutal speeches to living persons, for though he was goodnatured at bottom he was very ill-natured at top.

In considering Walpole's affected remarks on his own literary character, we should bear in mind the expressed opinions of so

<sup>1</sup> 22 January 1742.

<sup>2</sup> 20 December 1760.

<sup>3</sup> 27 March 1755.   <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 7 March 1761.

aristocratic an author as Byron, at a much later date. Walpole thought it would disgrace him to be known as a learned author, although, in his heart, he was proud of his books. He discloses his true character with a fine instinct more frequently when writing to Mann than to any other correspondent. At a quite early date, he takes Mann to task for over-estimating his abilities.

I must answer for your brother a paragraph that he showed me in one of your letters 'Mr W.'s letters are full of wit; don't they adore them in England?' 'Not at all—and I don't wonder at them; for if I have any wit in my letters, which I do not at all take for granted, it is ten to one I have none out of my letters.... Then as to adoring; you now see only my letters, and you may be sure I take care not to write you word of any of my bad qualities, which other people must see in the gross; and that may be a great hindrance to their adoration. Oh! there are a thousand other reasons I could give you, why I am not the least in fashion. I came over in an ill season: it is a million to one that nobody thinks a declining old minister's son has wit. At any time men in opposition have always most; but now it would be absurd for a courtier to have even common sense<sup>1</sup>.

The history of the growth of Walpole's works is fully detailed in the *Correspondence*; and, apparently, nearly all his books were written at high pressure. He particularly notes how long a time was occupied in their production. He was a dabbler in literature from his early life. He wrote, in 1742, a sermon on painting for the amusement of his father, which was afterwards published in *Ædes Walpolianæ*, and he was continually writing occasional verses, a practice in which he persevered when he possessed a private printing-press. It was not, however, until 1753 that he may be said to have begun his literary career with the writing of some clever papers in *The World*, a periodical written by men of fashion for men of fashion. His first substantive work was *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England*, printed at the Strawberry hill press in 1758. It is of no great value as a bibliography, but, dealing as it does with a distinctive subject, is of occasional use as well as of some interest. The next work, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, also printed at the Strawberry hill press, in 1762, is the only one of Walpole's works which has really held its position. It was reprinted several times by its author and twice reedited. The publication originated in the purchase of Vertue's valuable collections from his widow in 1756. Walpole, ten years before, had visited Vertue with the purpose of learning something about the MSS, of the existence of which he had previously heard. Vertue's notes, which are now preserved at the British museum, are disjointed and difficult to

<sup>1</sup> 7 January 1742.

decipher, and, therefore, it was much to Walpole's credit that he was able to produce from them a useful book, which has been constantly reprinted. Unfortunately, although a competent connoisseur, he had not sufficient knowledge to enable him to write a satisfactory history of painting, and his editors had not sufficient courage to correct his errors at all thoroughly, for he had a wonderful craze respecting the historical value of some old pictures which he had bought and incorrectly described in his *Anecdotes*<sup>1</sup>. It can hardly be doubted that the existence of Walpole's book has prevented the publication of a complete and trustworthy history of English painting.

Walpole's next works were *The Castle of Otranto* (1764—5) and *The Mysterious Mother* (1768). Byron affirmed that Walpole was 'the father of the first romance and the last tragedy in our language,' and he praised highly both romance and tragedy; but very few modern readers are likely to agree with him. *The Castle of Otranto* was originally published as a translation from an Italian original which appeared at Naples in 1529; but, when success was assured, it was acknowledged by its author. Of this story, which has become a sort of a classic of English literature, though few now care to read it, some account has been given in an earlier chapter<sup>2</sup>. *The Mysterious Mother* was printed at Strawberry hill in 1768; and, although Walpole perceived the unfitness for the stage of a tragedy with so repulsive a subject, he seems to have cherished a lingering hope of its production there, as he wrote an epilogue to it for Mrs Clive to speak. In reading the play we see that the slowness of the action was of itself sufficient to exclude it from performance; for, even an eighteenth century audience could not be expected to sit out four acts of the ravings of a woman the cause of whose remorse and agony is not disclosed until the end of the fifth act. Fanny Burney, being on friendly terms with Walpole, was anxious to read the play; but, after reading it, she 'felt a sort of indignant aversion rise' in her mind 'against the wilful author of a story so horrible; all the entertainment and pleasure I had received from Mr Walpole seemed extinguished.' Fanny's friend Mr Turbulent (Guiffardière) said: 'Mr Walpole has chosen a plan of which nothing can equal the abomination but the absurdity.'

*Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III,*

<sup>1</sup> Cf., for instance, his self-delusion as to his 'suit of the house of Lancaster,' long since corrected by Sir George Scharf.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. III, pp. 60—61, *ante*.

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written about the same time as *The Mysterious Mother*, offers a good example of Walpole's literary work. He chose an interesting subject and treated it with spirit. He was not, however, prepared to undertake the necessary research, and thus laid himself open to much severe criticism<sup>1</sup>. As two of his chief opponents were Milles, president, and Masters, a fellow, of the Society of Antiquaries, he resigned his fellowship of the society and swore hostility to most antiquaries, although a few, such as Cole and Gough, retained his favour. \* He never forgave his critics; but he had succumbed to their censures after a short fight.

Walpole's own feelings respecting his literary productions were very mixed. He wrote to Lady Ossory (15 September 1787):

I have several reasons for lamenting daily that I ever was author or editor.... Were I to recommence my life, and thought as I do now I do not believe that any consideration could induce me to be an author.... It is pride not humility, that is the source of my present sentiments. I have a great contempt for middling authors. We have not only betrayed want of genius but want of judgement.

These confessions have been treated as untrue, and as an affected condemnation of his writings. But this is unjust. He valued them as containing his own opinions, well expressed, on subjects which required elucidation; but he knew that they were not sound enough to bear learned criticism—and he quite sincerely repudiated his possession of special learning.

From Horace Walpole's we pass to some other names of renown in the form of literature in which he excelled.

Philip, fourth earl of Chesterfield, was one of the foremost English statesmen of his age; but he was so unlike an ordinary Englishman that his character has been much misunderstood by his countrymen. He thoroughly appreciated the French, and was appreciated by them in return. Sainte-Beuve considers him to have united the good qualities of the two nations, and he describes the *Letters to his Son* as a rich book, which, in spite of some objectionable passages, contains not a page without some happy observation worthy of being kept in remembrance. In any case, Chesterfield must be considered a unique personality. He was particularly unfortunate in his relations with Johnson, who was certainly not fair to him; and the cruel caricature in *Barnaby Rudge* of him as Sir John Chester, described as 'an elegant and polite, but heartless and unprincipled gentleman,' must have seriously

<sup>1</sup> Cf. as to this essay chap. XII, post.

injured his fame among many of those unacquainted with history. He was not unprincipled or heartless, and selfishness was by no means a marked feature of his character. His shining mental qualities were universally acknowledged, and he was accepted as a shrewd man of the world, with engaging manners; but we can learn something more than this about him from his letters.

Of Chesterfield's abilities as a statesman, his country did not obtain the full benefit, largely in consequence of court intrigues; for, though the ablest statesman of his time, after Walpole (if Pitt be left out), he was persistently set aside. His time came when he was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1745. He held office for less than a year, but proved his power of governing in a dangerous time, by the measures which he took to prevent disturbances. He gained the gratitude of the people, and the memory of his rule during a critical period remained fresh for more than a century. He retained his interest in Ireland, and always considered the Irish as his countrymen, because he had ruled over them. He withdrew from public life, partly on account of ill health; and, in 1752, his deafness had become very serious. In 1757, he emerged from his retirement in order to effect a reconciliation between the duke of Newcastle and Pitt.

Chesterfield has the reputation of eloquence; but his was not unstudied. Horace Walpole denied that Chesterfield was an orator, because his speeches were written; yet, in a letter to Mann (15 December 1743), he declared that 'the finest oration [he] ever did hear' was one from Chesterfield—and this was delivered against Sir Robert Walpole. Chesterfield's wit, like his speeches, was, to a certain extent, prepared; but it was the kind of wit which is the most agreeable form of wisdom.

Although he had many enemies, he had a genius for friendship. His greatest friend was Richard, second earl of Scarborough, whose character he drew—a man held in so high a general esteem that Chesterfield declares:

He was the best man I ever knew, the dearest friend I ever had.... We lived in intimate and unreserved friendship for twenty years, and to that I owe much more than my pride will let my gratitude own.

On Scarborough's melancholy death, Chesterfield wrote to his protégé Dr Chenevix<sup>1</sup>: 'We have both lost a good friend in Scarborough; nobody can replace him to me; I wish I could replace

<sup>1</sup> 18 February 1740.

him to you; but as things stand I see no great hopes of it.' Chesterfield appointed Chenevix to the first Irish bishopric of his gift (Killaloe) and, shortly afterwards, translated him to Waterford. He retained the bishop as a lifelong friend, and in the printed correspondence there are many bright letters to him which are full of kindly feeling, and to which he subscribed himself 'with the greatest truth and affection.' Another lifelong friend was the diplomatist Solomon Dayrolles, a godson of Chesterfield, whose letters to him are of an intimate character and full of the most natural feelings, expressed in an altogether charming manner. The name of Dayrolles will always be associated with that of Chesterfield, because of the dying statesman's considerate order, 'Give Dayrolles a chair.' Many other interesting letters are to be found in the correspondence, such as those to the Dublin bookseller, alderman Faulkener, whose friendship Chesterfield secured when in Ireland and retained through life; and Lady Suffolk, a much esteemed friend. This general correspondence is extremely interesting, and the letters it contains are models of what letters should be—natural, kindly and witty.

But Chesterfield's fame as a letter-writer must rest on his *Letters to his Son* and those *to his Godson*. His devotion to these two young men is a very remarkable indication of his true character. From 1737 (when his age was forty-three years) to the year of his death, it became little less than an obsession. He began writing letters of advice to his illegitimate son Philip Stanhope when the child was only five years old. When he had reached twenty-five, another Philip Stanhope (of Mansfield Woodhouse) was born. This was Chesterfield's godson and successor, whose education he undertook, and to whom he began to write educational letters when he was four years old. He, doubtless, was led to undertake these letters by the recollection of the neglect he had experienced from his own father, and his sense of its consequences.

When sitting in judgment on Chesterfield's letters to his son, we should not omit to remember that they were never intended for any eye but that of the receiver. He wrote (21 January 1751):

You and I must now write to each other as friends and without the least reserve; there will for the future be a thousand things in my letters which I would not have any mortal living but yourself see or know.

The *Letters* are written in English, Latin and French, and contain a large amount of valuable information on history, geography, and so forth, put in an easy and convenient form for the pupil. Philip Stanhope was censured for bad writing and bad spelling

and for inattention. His father told him that nothing was too small for attentive consideration and that concentrated attention on one subject at a time was of paramount importance: 'There is time enough for everything in the course of the day if you do one thing at once, but there is not time enough in the year if you will do two things at once.'

Honour and morality, the need of which is strongly urged in the *Letters*, do not include sexual morality: the writer recommends his son to seek intimate association with married women of fashion, in order to improve his manners, which, by nature, were somewhat boorish. The general principles of good breeding continually urged in the *Letters* have been strangely misunderstood. The object of life is to be pleased, and, in order to attain this, we must please others; but it is quite evident that more than surface pleasing is here intended. Both respect for the feelings of others and sympathy with them are enjoined. The young man is told 'never to be ashamed of doing what is right,' but to use his own judgment instead of blindly following others in what the fashionable world considers to be pleasure. Such is a sample of Chesterfield's wise saws, many of which have become familiar quotations, and which show his recollection of his own bitterly repented mistakes in early life. When Philip Stanhope went out into the world and his early education was completed, his father continued to send him letters of advice; but, in 1768, the young man died, and the father learned that he had been married and had two sons. Chesterfield received this unexpected news with composure, and wrote kindly to the widow, Eugenia Stanhope, saying that he would undertake all the expenses connected with the bringing up of her boys. He did not remove them from her care, but took much interest in them, and became attached to them, observing their different characters and advising as to them.

Chesterfield's literary fame rests upon his *Letters to his Son*, which were never intended for publication; but it has been augmented by his *Letters to his Godson*, which, also, were not intended to see the light of publicity. Fourteen of the letters on the art of pleasing, or, as the writer entitled them, 'The Duty, Utility and Means of Pleasing,' were first published in 1774 in four numbers of *The Edinburgh Magazine and Review*. In 1776, they were added to a Dublin edition of *Letters to his Son*, and were incorrectly described as written to the son—instead of to the godson. In 1778, they were reproduced as a supplement to

*Maty's Memoirs of Lord Chesterfield.* The complete series of *Chesterfield's Letters to his Godson* was not printed until 1890, when it was edited by the fourth earl of Carnarvon. Lord Carnarvon, by means of the charming *Life* which he prefixed to the *Letters*, placed Chesterfield's good name on a more substantial basis than that upon which it had hitherto rested.

These *Letters* follow very much the plan of their predecessors. They are sometimes in English, and more often in French. They contain the same form of instruction and anecdote, are written with the same mixture of wit and wisdom, and breathe the same affectionate interest of the writer in the doings of his correspondent. One of the letters may be specially mentioned, since it inculcates the spirit of two commandments, on which, according to the highest authority, 'hang all the law and the prophets.' Chesterfield writes :

I must from time to time remind you of two much more important dutys, which I hope you will never forget nor neglect. I mean your duty to God and your duty to Man.... Your duty to Man is very short and clear, it is only to do to him whatever you would be willing that he should do to you. And remember in all the business of your life to ask your conscience this question *Should I be willing that this should be done to me?* If your conscience which will always tell you truth answer No, do not do that thing.

Chesterfield took immense pains to show his two pupils how to live; and it evidently gave him great pleasure to watch over them, and to express to each of them his satisfaction in their progress. He must, however, have suffered disappointment when he found that, in point of manners, neither of them did justice to his intentions. His son, we learn from others, was 'loutish,' and Fanny Burney says of his godson that 'with much share of humour, and of good humour also, [he] has as little good breeding as any man I ever met with.'

Fanny Burney bore two surnames in succession; but her maiden name is that by which all true lovers know her, because it was when she had no right to any but this that she wrote and gained her fame. She may be Madame d'Arblay on certain formal occasions; but the author of *Evelina* is far too English for a foreign name to sit easy upon her<sup>1</sup>. The pictures of important events and the intimate records of Fanny's distinguished friends in her diaries and letters place these writings on a very high plane, entitling them to rank as reproductions of eighteenth century life not very far below the volumes of Walpole and Boswell. She relates all she saw and did with so

<sup>1</sup> As to Fanny Burney as a novelist, see chap. III, pp. 63 ff. *ante*.

much spirit and vivacity, filling in the blanks of other writers, that the reading of the various incidents is an inexhaustible pleasure. It may, indeed, be said that she discloses the inner life of three different worlds. In her *Early Diary* (1768—78), edited by Mrs Ellis (1889), the doings of her family are fully displayed, and the professional world of Dr Burney ('that clever dog,' as Johnson called him) is brightly sketched; Garrick, too, is constantly gliding over the scene and playing the fool in his inimitable way. But the most popular character of all is the eccentric 'daddy' Crisp—Samuel Crisp, the recluse of Chessington hall near Epsom—who was the special friend and correspondent of his 'Fannikin.' In the later *Diary and Letters* (1778—1840), edited by Mrs Charlotte Barrett (1842—6), there is more about the larger literary and political world, including the great event of the Hastings trial. The full and particular account of court life is of the greatest interest and value. On 6 July 1786, Fanny Burney was appointed second keeper of the robes to queen Charlotte, a position she held for five years. She received much kindness from the king and queen, who were fond of her; and, although, by reason of the rigid etiquette, the service was hard, she had much pleasant intercourse with her companions in the palace, whose portraits she painted with spirit. Her great and incessant trouble, however, was her inevitable long and close association with the terrible Mrs Schwellenberg, otherwise *Cerbera*. In course of time, the confinement which Fanny had to undergo affected her health, and her friends cried out for her release, even Walpole uttering complaints. Windham threatened to set 'The Club' on Dr Burney to induce him to obtain her freedom, and Boswell threatened to interfere—much to Fanny's annoyance, for she did not love the 'memorandummer' as she called him. Eventually, arrangements were made, and she finally left court in July 1791, the queen granting out of her own privy purse a pension or retiring allowance.

A most interesting feature of these diaries and letters is the introduction of clear-cut portraits of the people whom the writer knew and met. Johnson alluded to her powers in this respect when he addressed her as 'You little character-monger'; and, here, her early novel writing stood her in good stead. The description of Boswell's persecution of her at Windsor, while pressing unsuccessfully for the use of Johnson's letters, and reading to her, at the gates of the castle which she would not let him enter, bits from the forthcoming *Life*, is a fine bit of high comedy. Among Fanny Burney's later friends were the Lockes, owners of Norbury

park, above the vale of Mickleham. On her frequent visits to her hospitable friends, she became intimate with the French *émigrés* at Juniper hall; and, on 31 July 1793, she was married to one of them—d'Arblay—at Mickleham church. The pair had but little upon which to set up house; but Locke gave them a site, and the handsome subscription of generous friends for the novel *Camilla* produced sufficient funds for building a cottage, which was named Camilla Lacey. The marriage was a happy one in spite of lack of means; but, in 1801, d'Arblay determined to return to France, and his wife followed him. The restoration of Louis XVIII brought better times, but, in July 1815, general d'Arblay met with an accident and was placed on the retired list of the French army. Austin Dobson describes him as one of the most delightful figures in his wife's *Diary*. On 3 May 1818, he died at Bath. This sad event virtually closes the work, and, although Madame d'Arblay lived until 1840, there are few letters left after her husband's death.

Mrs Elizabeth Montagu was one of a bright company of brilliant women<sup>1</sup>; and, in spite of rivals, she reigned supreme for fifty years as the chosen hostess of the intellectual society of London. Mrs Vesey, for a time, was a prominent rival, because, as wife of Agmondesham Vesey, a member of 'The Club,' she came forward as the special hostess of that select company. The fame of Mrs Montagu has much waned, and, probably, her letters, published by her nephew Matthew Montagu in 1809—13, are little read now. This collection does not reach a date later than 1761; of the remainder of the correspondence from that date to the end of Mrs Montagu's life, consisting, for the most part, of letters to Mrs Robinson and a few other friends, Doran made a selection, which he printed with remarks of his own in biographical form, in 1873, under the title *A Lady of the last Century (Mrs Elizabeth Montagu) illustrated in her unpublished Letters*. Although this lady was surrounded by the intellect of her time (she informed Garrick that she never invited idiots to her house), she did not succeed in emulating Fanny Burney in the portraiture of her friends. Windham praised her letters highly, but more for their style than for the particular interest of the subjects discussed. 'The flow of her style,' he writes, 'is not less natural, because it is fully charged with shining particles, and sparkles as it flows.' Her correspondent

<sup>1</sup> For a general account of the Blue Stockings, see vol. xi. The word first occurs in Mrs Montagu's correspondence, in 1757.

during fifty years was Lady Margaret Harley, daughter of the second earl of Oxford and wife of the second duke of Portland, who was also a life long friend of Mrs Delany.

Elizabeth Robinson was the elder daughter of Matthew Robinson, a Yorkshire squire, and her early education was advanced by the instruction of Dr Conyers Middleton, the second husband of her maternal grandmother, who lived at Cambridge. Her father, also, was fond of encouraging her to make smart repartees to his witty and caustic remarks, until he was beaten in these encounters and had to discontinue them. She became rather a formidable young lady and from her volatile disposition she acquired the sobriquet 'Fidget.' She married, in 1742, Edward Montagu, a grandson of the first earl of Sandwich, a quiet man who was contented that his wife should rule in her own drawing-room. Doran describes him as 'a mathematician of great eminence and a coal-owner of great wealth.' The match appears to have been a happy one, although the tastes of the two parties were very different.

Mrs Montagu was fond of society, and the pleasures of the town had a great attraction for her; but she was also a great reader and somewhat of a student, so she was often glad to exchange the gaieties of London for the quiet pleasures of the country. She formed a sort of salon at her house in Hill street and gathered a brilliant company round her. Johnson was glad to be one of her honoured guests; but his feelings towards her seem to have been mixed. He acknowledged that she was 'a very extraordinary woman,' adding 'she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated, it has always meaning.' At other times, he said some disagreeable things of her and to her. Something in her talk seems to have annoyed him—possibly her sharp repartees may not have pleased the dogmatic doctor. Lyttelton, Burke, Wilberforce and Reynolds were also among her 'favourite guests. Mrs Montagu's husband died in 1775 and left all his property to his wife; but, though Horace Walpole at once jumped to the conclusion that she would marry again, she preferred to adopt a nephew, who succeeded to her possessions. She continued to be a hostess and built herself a mansion on the north-west corner of Portman square; but the glory had, to a great extent, departed, and the large parties that could be accommodated in the new house were dull compared with the smaller gatherings in Hill street. In her later letters, she gives much information respecting the management of her large estates, in which she proved herself a good economist. Her *Essay*

*on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare with Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Mons. De Voltaire* (1769) has been noticed elsewhere<sup>1</sup>.

David Garrick<sup>2</sup> was a brilliant and agreeable letter-writer, and, even when angry with those correspondents who worried him exceedingly, he continued to be bright and lively in his replies. His letters give an admirable idea of his mercurial disposition, and it has been said that he was never second in the keenest encounter of wits. The two quarto volumes of his correspondence, published by James Boaden in 1831—2, are of great value and interest, consisting of letters from many distinguished persons, and his answers to them. The miscellaneous letters were collected by Garrick himself, and copies of his own letters added to them. It has been suggested that he may have had the intention of using them as the groundwork of an autobiography; at any rate, he must have considered it important to keep the originals of his various controversies for his own justification. The correspondence is now preserved, together with family letters (not printed by Boaden) and some others, in the Forster collection at the Victoria and Albert museum. They form thirty-five bound volumes and are of considerable value. Boaden, however, arranged the letters carelessly, without putting his materials in a satisfactory chronological order or providing a much-needed index; but he added a good life of the actor, largely founded upon the materials printed by him. An improved, and more convenient, edition containing a fairly complete collection of Garrick's letters, while condensing those of his correspondents, would be a valuable addition to our literature. As it is, however, Boaden's collection shows how important a figure Garrick filled in the intellectual world of the eighteenth century.

The list of his correspondents contains the names of most of the distinguished men of his time, such as Lords Camden, Chatham and Lyttelton, Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, Goldsmith, Boswell, Burney, Hogarth, Hume, Sheridan and Steevens. Burke, who entertained the highest opinion of Garrick, was one of his best friends. He addressed him as 'My dear David,' 'My dear Garrick' and sometimes 'My dearest Garrick,' and concluded his letters in terms of affection. Johnson and Garrick, notwithstanding their early relations, never got further than 'Dear sir,' and ended their letters

<sup>1</sup> See *Ante*, vol. v, p. 293 *p* and cf. vol. xi.

<sup>2</sup> For Garrick as an actor, manager and dramatist, see chap. iv, pp. 85—86, *ante*.

in formal style. Mrs Montagu was a frequent correspondent and the writer of some of the best letters in the collection. On one occasion, she is found entreating Garrick, on behalf of her friend Mrs Vesey, to obtain the election of that lady's husband Agmondesham Vesey, into the select circle of 'The Club.' The bulk of the correspondence relates to theatrical affairs, as to which Garrick was in constant trouble, by reason of his strenuous attention to his duties as manager. The actors are constantly complaining, and the actresses, who were jealous of him and of each other, sometimes almost drove him mad. Mrs Cibber, Mrs Yates, Mrs Abington and Mrs Clive—all gave trouble in various ways; but Garrick's feelings were essentially different as to the last two ladies in the list. Mrs Abington permanently annoyed him. He added to a letter, written by her in 1776: 'The above is a true copy of the letter, examined word by word, of that worst of bad women Mrs Abington, to ask my playing for her benefit, and why?' On the other hand, Kitty Clive and he were always quarrelling and making it up, since they thoroughly esteemed each other. In 1765, Kitty wrote an angry letter: 'Sir, I beg you would do me the favour to let me know if it was by your order that my money was stopped last Saturday.' In 1776, she wrote a letter which Garrick endorsed 'My Pivy—excellent.' It was not only the actors and actresses who annoyed Garrick—the playwrights were equally, if not more, troublesome. There is a long series of letters between Murphy and Garrick, which shows that they were continually at war with one another. The latter part of the second volume of Boaden's work is full of interesting letters from Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of distinction, proving how highly Garrick's genius was appreciated in France. Diderot, Marmontel, Mme Necker, Fréron, Mlle Clairon and Le Kain were among his correspondents.

The letters of Garrick do not throw much light upon his training for the stage. He seems to have been born an actor, with all the qualities of a first-rate comedian, while his achievements as a tragedian were the result of his genius and the powers of his imagination. He was of no school, and he had no master. He was well educated and possessed a singular charm of manner; but he obtained his great position by incessant study, persistent practice and wide observation. Burke described him as one of the deepest observers of man. Well might Quin say that, if Garrick was right, he and his school were all wrong! He liked to astonish spectators by his sudden change from the all-inspiring tragedian to the

laughter-forcing comedian. His Lear and his Abel Drugger were equally amazing. It was the freshness, the brightness and life of his style that made the instant acceptance of him as the greatest of living actors secure. At thirty, he was joint lessee of Drury lane theatre. In 1776, he retired from the stage and sold his moiety of the theatre to Sheridan, Linley and Ford. He kept up his interest in the stage; but he had little time to enjoy his well earned rest, and died in 1779, universally regretted. Burke wrote an epitaph, which unfortunately was rejected in favour of a foolish inscription by Pratt, for the monument in Westminster abbey. It was in a passage of the former that Garrick was said to have 'raised the character of his profession to the rank of a liberal art.'

It may not seem inappropriate to add in this place a few words concerning the series of *Discourses* delivered by Sir Joshua Reynolds, from 1769 to 1790, to the students of the Royal Academy. These *Discourses* have become a classic of our language, because they are justly regarded as a model of art criticism, devoted as they are to essentials and written in a style of great beauty and distinction, and exhibiting in every page Reynolds's love and knowledge of his art, as well as the literary powers of his mind. The advice of a master grounded on his own knowledge and practice must always possess a real value, and Reynolds is severe in his condemnation of the futility of much art criticism by amateurs.

'There are,' he writes, 'many writers on our Art, who not being of the profession and consequently not knowing what can or what cannot be done, have been very liberal of absurd praises in their descriptions of favourite works. They *always* find in them what they are resolved to find.' And, again: 'it has been the fate of *Arts* to be enveloped in mysterious and incomprehensible language, as if it was thought necessary that even the terms should correspond to the idea entertained of the instability and uncertainty of the rules which they expressed.'

In urging the duty of industry and perseverance, he has been supposed to imply a doubt as to the existence of genius; but, when he affirms that the supposed genius must use the same hard means of obtaining success as are imposed upon others, a deeper scepticism than was really his need not be imputed to him. It was a false idea of genius which he desired to correct.

Genius is supposed to be a power of producing excellences which are out of the reach of the rules of art: a power which no precepts can teach, and which no industry can acquire.

In another place, he says :

'The industry which I principally recommended is not the industry of the hands, but of the mind.' Further, when advocating the duty of clear

expression: 'If in order to be intelligible, I appear to degrade art by bringing her down from the visionary situation in the clouds, it is only to give her a solid mansion upon the earth.'

The first *Discourse* was delivered at the opening of the Royal Academy and deals with the advantages to be expected from the institution of that body. The ninth *Discourse* is, again, general, and was delivered on the removal of the Royal Academy from Pall Mall to Somerset place. The fifteenth and last contains the president's farewell to the students and members of the Royal Academy and a review of the scope of the *Discourses*, ending with an eulogium on Michel Angelo :

I reflect not without vanity that these *Discourses* bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of MICHEL ANGELO.

Burke, who was in the president's chair, then descended from the rostrum, taking the lecturer's hand, and said, in Milton's words :

The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear  
So charming left his voice, that he awhile  
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear<sup>1</sup>.

The incident illustrates the deep interest taken by Burke in his friend's *Discourses*; and it has been suggested that he had much to do with their composition. But they so evidently contain Reynolds's own individual views, and the thoughts are expressed so naturally and clearly, that such an idea must be put aside as absurd. Reynolds was a highly cultured man, and, doubtless, he gained much in clearness of literary insight by his intimate association with such men as Johnson and Burke; but a careful study of the *Discourses* would prove to most readers that the language as well as the thoughts were Reynolds's own. He was, however, not the man to reject suggested improvement in style from his distinguished friends, and, doubtless, both Johnson and Burke proposed some verbal improvements in the proofs.

The general reception of the work was extremely favourable; and that it was appreciated abroad is evidenced by the empress Catharine of Russia's present to Reynolds of a gold snuffbox, adorned with her portrait in relief, set in diamonds, as an expression of her appreciation of the *Discourses*.

The plan of the *Discourses*, carried on through many years, is consistent throughout. The writer did not interfere with the teaching of the professors; but it was his aim to deal with the

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, bk viii, vv. 1—3.

general principles underlying the art. He started by pointing out the dangers of facility, as there is no short path to excellence. When the pupil's genius has received its utmost improvement, rules may, possibly, be dispensed with ; but the author adds : ' Let us not destroy the scaffold until we have raised the building.' In claiming the right to teach, he modestly says that his hints are in a great degree founded on his own mistakes.

The earlier half of the series dealt with the objects of study, the leading principles to be kept in view and the four general ideas which regulate every branch of the art—invention, expression, colouring and drapery. Much stress is laid upon the importance of imitation ; but this word must be accurately defined :

Study Nature attentively but always with those masters in your company ; consider them as models which you are to imitate, and at the same time as rivals with whom you are to contend.

The second half is appropriated to the consideration of more general points, such as genius and imagination. The tenth *Discourse*, on sculpture, is the least satisfactory of the series. The fourteenth *Discourse* is of special interest as relating to Gainsborough ; and the particulars of the meeting of the two great painters at the death-bed of Gainsborough are charmingly related.

Although great changes have taken place in public opinion in the relative estimation of various schools of painting, most of Reynolds's remarks, dealing as they do with essentials, remain of value. The book is charming reading for all who love art, and the reader will close it with a higher appreciation of the character of the man and the remarkable insight of the great painter.

Hannah More's life was a remarkable one, and her fame as an author, at one time considerable, was kept alive until near the middle of the nineteenth century. It is at present nearly dead and is not likely to revive. But her correspondence is most undeservedly neglected, for she was a good letter-writer, and her accounts of the doings of the intellectual world are of great interest, and worthy to be read after Fanny Burney and Mrs Thrale. We have full information respecting the doings of Johnson's circle from different points of view ; but there is much fresh information in Hannah More's letters. Boswell was offended with the young lady and is often spiteful in his remarks about her. The story of the value of her flattery<sup>1</sup> has been made too much of, for there is

<sup>1</sup> See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ed. Hill, G. B., vol. III, p. 298.

plenty of evidence that Johnson highly esteemed the character of Hannah More. Sally More was a lively writer and she gives a vivid picture of her sister's intercourse with Johnson in 1775.

We drank tea at Sir Joshua's with Dr Johnson. Hannah is certainly a great favourite. She was placed next him, and they had the entire conversation to themselves. They were both in remarkably high spirits; it was certainly her lucky night! I have never heard her say so many good things. The old genius was extremely jocular, and the young one very pleasant.

The scene had changed when Hannah More met Johnson at Oxford, in the year of his death, at dinner in the lodge at Pembroke. She wrote home :

Who do you think is my principal cicerone at Oxford? Only Dr Johnson, and we do so gallant it about! You cannot imagine with what delight he showed me every part of his own college.... When we came into the Common room, we spied a fine large print of Johnson, framed and hung up that very morning with this motto: 'And is not Johnson ours, himself a host?' Under which stared you in the face 'From Miss More's *Sensibility*.' This little incident amused us;—but alas! Johnson looks very ill indeed—spiritless and wan. However he made an effort to be cheerful and I exerted myself much to make him so.

The triumphant entrance into the great London world by Hannah More, a young Bristol schoolmistress, is difficult to account for except on the grounds of her remarkable abilities. An agreeable young lady of seven and twenty, fresh from the provinces, who gained at once the cordial friendship not only of Garrick, Reynolds, Johnson and Horace Walpole but of Mrs Elizabeth Montagu and the literary ladies of the day, and who became herself one of the leaders of the Blue Stockings, must have been a woman very much out of the common. When Hannah More came first to London, she visited Reynolds, whose sister promised to introduce her to Johnson. She then met Garrick, who was first interested in her because of some intelligent criticism of his acting which he had seen. He and his wife became Hannah's dearest friends, and, on hearing of Mrs Garrick's death, Hannah More wrote to a friend (21 October 1822):

I spent above twenty winters under her roof, and gratefully remember not only their personal kindness, but my first introduction through them into a society remarkable for rank, literature and talents.

She kept up her correspondence with her distinguished London friends; but most of them had died before she had arrived at middle age. We then notice a considerable change in the subjects of her correspondence, and her letters are occupied with the

progress of some of the great movements in which she was interested. Wilberforce was a constant correspondent, and he found her a warm helper in the anti-slavery cause. When she and her sisters gave up their school at Bristol and retired on a competence, she devoted all her time to philanthropic purposes. This is not the place for dealing with the subjects of her voluminous writings, and they are only referred to here as an indication of the more serious character of the later correspondence<sup>1</sup>.

Gilbert White's *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789) holds a unique position in English literature as the solitary classic of natural history. It is not easy to give, in a few words, a reason for its remarkable success. It is, in fact, not so much a logically arranged and systematic book as an invaluable record of the life work of a simple and refined man who succeeded in picturing himself as well as what he saw. The reader is carried along by his interest in the results of far-sighted observation; but, more than this, the reader imbibes the spirit of the writer which pervades the whole book and endears it to like-minded naturalists as a valued companion.

For some twenty years or more (1767—87), White wrote a series of letters to Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington, giving a remarkable account of the chief instances of the special habits of animals and of natural phenomena which he was daily observing. Although these correspondents asked him questions and remarked upon his observations, they learned much more from White than he from them. Pennant is severely criticised by Thomas Bell, one of the editors of White's work, who writes: 'The man to whom the vain and self-seeking author of "British Zoology" was so greatly indebted is almost entirely ignored.' The late Alfred Newton, in his notice of Gilbert White in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, however, exonerates Pennant, noting that 'In the preface he generally but fully acknowledges White's services.' White's friendship with Barrington appears to have begun about the end of 1767, the first published letter to him being dated June 1769. Barrington, in 1770, suggested the publication of White's observations; but, although White thought favourably of the advice, he was diffident and did not prepare his materials for press until January 1788. Even then, there was more delay, so the book was not published until 1789.

White seems to have collected largely, with the ultimate object

<sup>1</sup> Cf., as to Hannah More, *post*, vol. XI.

of forming a naturalist's calendar; for, writing to Pennant on 19 July 1771, he expresses his diffidence in respect to publishing his notes because

I ought to have begun it twenty years ago.—If I was to attempt anything, it should be somewhat of a Natural History of my native parish, an *Annus Historio-Naturalis*, comprising a journal for one whole year, and illustrated with large notes and observations.'

Eventually, he did not make any considerable alteration in his letters but left all the vivid pictures in their original setting; and *The Naturalist's Calendar* did not see the light until two years after his death—in 1795.

A *Quarterly* reviewer<sup>1</sup>, speaking of White, describes him as 'a man the power of whose writings has immortalised an obscure village and a tortoise,—for who has not heard of Timothy—as long as the English language lives.' The life history of Timothy may be read in White's letters, and in the amusing letter to Miss Hecky Mulso, afterwards Mrs Chapone (31 August 1784), written by him in the name of Timothy. The tortoise was an American, born in 1734 in the province of Virginia, who remembered the death of his great-great-grandfather in the 160th year of his age. Thomas Bell disputes the American origin and believes the animal to have belonged to a north African species, naming it *testudo marginata*; but Bennet held that it was distinct and he described and named it *T. Whitei*, after the man who had immortalised it.

Selborne may be obscure; but it is a beautiful village in a beautiful country eminently suited for the purpose of White in making it the centre of a life's work of zoological research and observation. The book was immediately popular both with the general public and with all naturalists, many of the most eminent of which class have successively edited it with additional and corroborative notes.

White's was an uneventful life as we usually understand the phrase; but it was also a full and busy one, the results of which have greatly benefited his fellow men. He was born and died at Selborne; and that delightful neighbourhood was the centre of his world. But it would be a mistake to forget that he was a man of capacity equal to the duties of a larger sphere. He was for fifty years a fellow of Oriel college, Oxford, and, for some of these years, dean of the college. In 1757, there was an election for the provostship, when, although Musgrave was chosen, White had many supporters. He quitted residence at Oxford in the following

<sup>1</sup> Vol. LXXI, no. 141, p. 8 note; art. on *The Honey-Bee*.

year, with the intention of settling permanently at Selborne. He refused several college livings for this reason, although he held the living of Moreton Pinckney in Northamptonshire as a non-resident incumbent. Notwithstanding this apparent indifference to duty, he worked successively in several curacies, the last being that of his beloved Selborne.

## II

## THE WARWICKSHIRE COTERIE

Somewhat apart from the more famous letter-writers of the age stood a circle of friends, some of whom might be described as in the great world while none were exactly of it, whose correspondence, and more general literary work, are full of interest. They were all, at one time or another, dwellers in Warwickshire or on its borders, lived at no great distance from each other and wrote frequently when they did not meet. Perhaps the poet Shenstone is the most obvious link between them: they all were acquainted with him, if they were not all personally known to each other. The circle includes Henrietta Lady Luxborough, of Barrels near Henley-in-Arden; Frances duchess of Somerset, one of whose residences was Ragley near Alcester; Richard Graves, who belonged to the family which owned Mickleton, not actually in Warwickshire but not far from Stratford-on-Avon; Richard Jago, who was vicar of Harbury and held other cures in the county; William Somerville, of Edstone near Henley; and it was completed by persons who were not so much writers themselves as friends of men of letters, such as Anthony Whistler (who had been at Pembroke college, Oxford, with Graves and Shenstone), and Sanderson Miller, antiquary and architect, the builder of the tower on Edge-hill commemorated by Jago in his poem. Nearly all of these wrote good letters, which were published, and most of them at least dabbled in literature also, in light verse or easy prose. And all were more or less in the net of the omnivorous publisher Robert Dodsley, who did a great deal to make Shenstone and the Leasowes famous<sup>1</sup>.

Of Somerville<sup>2</sup>, a scholar and a gentleman (though his writing

<sup>1</sup> As to Robert Dodsley, see *ante*, vol. ix, pp. 190—1 *et al.*

<sup>2</sup> This spelling has been continued in the present chapter for the sake of uniformity. The name was, however, always spelt *Somerville* in the autograph letters of its owner and in his works printed in his lifetime.

does not always suggest it) some account has already been given in an earlier chapter<sup>1</sup>: his prose, in prefaces and letters, many of the latter still unpublished, is of the good, sonorous, somewhat pedantic kind which was beginning, even when he wrote, to be old-fashioned. Another country gentleman was Anthony Whistler of Whitchurch, an Eton boy, who imbibed 'such a dislike to learning languages that he could not read the Classics, but no one formed a better judgment of them,' and was 'a young man of great delicacy of sentiment.' As an undergraduate, he published anonymously, in 1736, a poem entitled *The Shuttlecock*. He died in 1754, aged forty. For many years he had corresponded with Shenstone and Graves, and, on his death, the former wrote to the latter "the triumvirate which was the greatest happiness and the greatest pride of my life is broken." Few of their letters, unfortunately, are preserved. Through Sanderson Miller, the squire of Radway at the foot of Edge-hill and the friend of all the noble builders and gardeners of the age (except Horace Walpole who rarely lost an opportunity of laughing at him), the Warwickshire coterie had links at once with the great world and with the greatest writer of the age. It was in his drawing-room that Fielding read the manuscript of *Tom Jones* to an admiring circle of ladies and gentlemen; and for an improvement which Pitt generously designed in his garden Miller happily thanked

The Paymaster, well skilled in planting,  
Pleased to assist when cash was wanting,  
He bid my Laurels grow: they grew  
Fast as his Laurels always do.

It was no doubt as a refuge from domestic unhappiness that Lady Luxborough turned to literature and sought the friendship of lesser poets. Born about 1700, she was half-sister of Henry St John, afterwards viscount Bolingbroke, to whom she was all her life devotedly attached<sup>2</sup>. In 1727, she married Robert Knight, son of the cashier of the South Sea company, whom Horace Walpole contemptuously calls a 'transport.' About nine years later, she was separated from her husband in consequence of some scandal which has never been verified. Horace Walpole, who disliked her and her friends, speaks of a 'gallantry' in which Dalton, tutor to the son of Lady Hertford (afterwards duchess of Somerset) was concerned; but this is unlikely, for the friendship of the two ladies

<sup>1</sup> See chap. v, pp. 109 ff. *ante*. As to Jago, see *ibid.* pp. 112—113. As to Shenstone, see chap. vii, pp. 149 ff., *ante*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ante*, vol. ix, p. 217 and note.

was unbroken, and Lady Hertford was a particularly upright and scrupulous person. Family tradition associates her rather with Somerville; but this, again, does not seem probable. Whatever the cause, Henrietta Knight was banished to Barrels in 1736, and never saw her husband (who became Lord Luxborough in 1746 and earl of Catherlough in 1763, seven years after her death) again.

At Barrels, she lived quietly, but made friends with her neighbours, and became the centre of a literary society which included Shenstone and Somerville, Graves, Jago and a number of Warwickshire clergy. She was the 'Asteria' of their poems, which commemorated her love of letters, her library and her garden. Her letters to Shenstone were carefully preserved by him, and he described them as 'written with abundant ease, Politeness, and Vivacity; in which she was scarce equalled by any woman of her time.' She, certainly, wrote with simplicity and charm about trivial things, such as her friends' poetry and her own horticultural experiments—one of her letters contains a delightful defence of autumn; and, after the manner of ladies in society who have any knowledge of literature, she had an exaggerated appreciation of the literary achievements of her friends. Her adulation of Shenstone is so excessive that one almost begins to suspect her of a warmer feeling. The letters which he received from her between 1739 and 1756 were published by Dodsley in 1775, and three years later there appeared, under the editorship of Thomas Hull the actor, two more volumes of correspondence between them, with other letters from the duchess of Somerset, Miss Dolman (Shenstone's cousin), Thomas Percy (of the *Reliques*) who had himself connections with Warwickshire<sup>1</sup>, Dodsley, Whistler and others. They discussed public affairs sparingly, though, in later years, they were all, through the Lytteltons, much interested in Pitt; they talked a great deal about gardens, and waterfalls, statues and urns; and they cast a favourable eye upon contemporary literature, admiring Thomson (whose *Spring* was dedicated to Lady Hertford), thinking very well of Gray's *Elegy*, and being 'highly entertained with the *History of Sir Charles Grandison*, which is so vastly above *Pamela* or *Clarissa*.' Though the authors were students of the greater letter-writers, of Mme de Sévigné, Pope and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, their own interests were simple, only slightly tinged with the sentimental affectations of

<sup>1</sup> As to Percy, see chap. 7, *ante*.

the shepherdesses and hermits with whom the poets played, genuinely delighting in out of door pleasures, but not averse from a good dinner and a glass of wine. They present a picture of English country life, in a literary circle, unsurpassed, if not unique, in its veracity and completeness. Hull's collection goes down to 1775, and is concluded by some rather tedious reflections from a 'Miss N——' upon Venice and the residences and manners of John, third duke (and thirty-first earl) of Atholl, a benevolent personage who drowned himself in the Tay in 1774.

The *Correspondence between Frances Countess of Hertford (afterwards Duchess of Somerset) and Henrietta Louisa Countess of Pomfret*, which was not published till 1805, belongs to an earlier period, extending from 1738 to 1741. The two ladies were both of the bedchamber of queen Caroline, and it was Lady Hertford who obtained the pardon of Savage through the queen's influence. Johnson, who pays her a lofty compliment on this, is less polite towards her interests in literature, and tells us that it was her 'practice to invite every summer some poet into the country, to hear her verses, and assist her studies,' adding that this honour was one year conferred on Thomson, but he 'took more delight in carousing with Lord Hertford and his friends than assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.' Another poet who dedicated a volume to her was Isaac Watts, and Shenstone's ode, *Rural Elegance*, was also, after her death, inscribed to her memory. Her correspondent Henrietta, countess of Pomfret, was granddaughter of lord chancellor Jeffreys, and her letters from France and Italy faintly recall the style of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with some details, not uninteresting, of life at foreign courts. Lady Hertford was a shrewd observer, and contributes opinions on the early methodists which represent the judgment of the quiet, cultivated, religious society to which, after her retirement from court, she belonged. Two smart poems in Dodsley's collection<sup>1</sup> refer to her supposed affection for Sir William Hamilton; and gossips made free with her name, but quite without reason. Her later years, at least, those of warm friendship with Lady Luxborough, were secluded and sad.

'After a Ball or Masquerade,' she wrote, in language which well illustrates the style of these letters, 'have we not come Home very well contented to pull off our Ornaments and fine Cloaths in order to go to rest? Such, methinks,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. vi, pp. 280—1.

in the Reception we naturally give to the Warnings of bodily Decays; they seem to undress us by Degrees, to prepare us for a Rest that will refresh us more powerfully than any Night's Sleep could do.'

There is, indeed, in most of the members of this coterie, a pensive, even plaintive, tone. Jago found the country clergyman's quiet melancholy natural to him, and, if Shenstone began by being sad as night only for wantonness, his retirement at the Leasowes, in spite of the interest of his wilderness, his waterfall and his urns, and the polite appreciation of his fashionable neighbours, soon tinged his sedentary and self-indulgent life with sorrow and regret as well as with dyspepsia and fretfulness. But he could write a cheerful letter and a bright and ingenious essay to the last. His friend Graves, to whom a large number of his letters were addressed, in the *Recollections of some particulars* of his life (1788), perhaps the most interesting of his works, gives him not undeserved credit for

such a justness of thought and expression, and such a knowledge of human nature as well as of books that, if we consider how little [he] had conversed with the great world, one would think he had almost an intuitive knowledge of the characters of men.

He had, indeed, all the acuteness of observation which belongs to the literary recluse, and he wrote with an entire absence of affectation and an easy grace which made his letters not unworthy to stand among the very best of those which the eighteenth century produced. Passages of pleasant fancy or humour, of description and of criticism, occur again and again in his correspondence, and, whatever may be said of his poetry, his prose style is eminently felicitous. Admirers of good writing have too long neglected him.

The same may be said of his intimate friend, Richard Graves, well known to all the Warwickshire coterie. He wrote so much that there is a natural temptation to regard him as a mere scribbler or a literary hack. Such a judgment would be most unjust. ~~He~~ lived to be nearly ninety, and in so many years it is no tedious achievement to have written some dozen books that are worth reading, besides a few more which, perhaps, are not. Graves was a fellow of All Souls, and there began a lifelong friendship with Blackstone. He was a poet, and a collector of poems: *Euphrosyne* and *The Festoon* bear witness. He was a translator of Marcus Aurelius and of many ancient epigrams. He was a correspondent of clever people, but better pleased to receive than to write letters and not one to copy and preserve those

he had written. He was a diligent country parson (not to be confused with his son, sometime vicar of Great Malvern, whose boyish skill in Latin was commended by Shenstone), never away for a month at a time in all the fifty-five years he was rector of Claverton. In that delightful village, at an easy distance from Bath, by a charming country road, along which he walked almost every weekday for more than fifty years, he resided from 1749 to 1804, paying occasional visits to London, to Warwickshire and to the Leasowes. He was chaplain to the countess of Chatham, and became private tutor to several eminent persons, such as Prince Hoare and Malthus; and, at Bath, he was a popular figure, the intimate friend of 'lowborn Allen' and his nephew-in-law, bishop Warburton. He had the knack of writing pleasing trivialities in the form of essays, which contained often curious information, entertaining anecdotes and sound morals. But his chief success, which should preserve his memory green, was as a novelist. He was unquestionably the most natural and effective writer of prose tales in his time, and might almost claim to be the originator of unemotional, impassionate romances of rural life and manners.

*The Spiritual Quixote* (1772), his most famous story, and the only one which, in his own time, achieved a second edition, is a tale of a young country squire who was influenced by the methodists and took a long tour of the midlands, suffering a number of mild adventures, as a follower of Whitefield. Graves had been at Pembroke, Oxford, and never quite overcame his disdain of the servitor. He makes great fun of the followers of methodism; but he always respects genuine piety. Descriptions of open air preaching and of the treatment of the preachers are frequent: he could never get rid of the conviction that, in spite of irregularities, methodism was showing the parish clergy how to do their duty. But this is only a small part of the interest of *The Spiritual Quixote*: its real attraction lies in the accounts of the social life and entertainments of the time, the ways of travellers and the customs of rustics and innkeepers. So, again, *Columella, or the Distressed Anchorite* (1776), which, like its predecessor, has a detailed (this time faintly disguised) picture of Shenstone, records the travels of a lawyer and a college don and the placid, but not always proper, recreations of a sluggish country gentleman of small fortune and literary interest. There is a placid satisfaction in the outlook on life which represents not only the attitude of *Columella's* old friends but that of Graves himself. Thus, he speaks of the journey

of Atticus the 'solemn Head of a college,' and Hortensius 'the sage Counsel learned in the law':—

The consciousness of having punctually discharged every duty of their respective stations diffused an ease and cheerfulness over their minds, and left them open to enjoyment, and at leisure to receive amusement from every object that presented itself in the way. The freshness of the morning, the serenity of the air, the verdure of the fields, every gentleman's seat, every farm-house, and every cottage they passed by, or every village they rode through, afforded some kind of pleasing reflections to persons of their happy disposition.... Thus if they overtook or were overtaken by anyone on the road, even of the lowest rank, instead of passing him by with a supercilious air, as if he were of a different species, they considered him in the same light as a sportsman would a partridge or a woodcock, as one that might afford them either pleasure or instruction; and usually commenced a conversation.

This was the way in which Graves lived and wrote. Yet he was not blind, as *Columella* shows, to the seamy side of things.

More delicate than *Columella* are the two charming little volumes entitled *Eugenius or Anecdotes of the Golden Vale* (1785), which, from a description or two of scenery, suggest that the neighbourhood of the Wye was familiar to the writer and thus account, perhaps, for the reference in *The Spiritual Quixote* to Pope's 'Man of Ross'—'What, old Kyrle! I knew him well; he was an honest old cock and loved his pipe and a Tankard of cider as well as the best of us.'—They show, too, as do other of Graves's writings, in a touch here and there, a knowledge of the habits and sufferings of the poor almost as intimate as Crabbe's. *Plexippus or The Aspiring Plebeian*, published (anonymously as was *Columella*) in 1790, is a quiet tale of the love affairs of two young men, eminently sober and respectable, told in the pleasantest vein of Graves's quiet observation of mankind. Cheltenham, Wales and London are the scenes of the story, which is of the placid type that Graves loved. In his later years, he wrote essays and studies of character, with a few *vers de société*, all very gentle, unaffected and trivial; and he kept green, to the last, the memory of his friend Shenstone and the literary circle in which he had moved.

The venue was now changed to Bath, where everybody in the later eighteenth century (except poor Lady Luxborough, the terms of whose separation from her husband would not allow her even to go on the Bath road) came sooner or later. At Lady Miller's, of Bath Easton, the undoubted original of Mrs Leo Hunter, a company of poetasters and dilettantes met every week for some years; Graves, who was constantly present, records, with a little flutter of satisfaction, that on one occasion he met four duchesses. The

results of their poetic contests were published in 1775 as *Poetical Amusements at a Villa near Bath*, increased to three volumes a year later, a sign of the popularity of this tepid form of literary dissipation. The verses themselves are often ingenious, and the 'candid reader' is asked by their editor to

recollect that they were frequently the production of a few days—most of them of as many hours; [and] that they originated amidst the hurry of plays, balls, public breakfasts, and concerts, and all the dissipations of a full *Bath Season*—alike unfriendly to contemplation and the Muses.

By the time they were written, most of the earlier and much more brilliant literary coterie to which Graves had belonged had passed away, and he was the only survivor with any claim to be a true man of letters. The Leasowes had received all the wit and fashion of the earlier time, and lovers of good literature had always been welcome at Barrels. It is, indeed, round Shenstone and Lady Luxborough, the poet and the letter-writer of unaffected charm, that the memory of the Warwickshire coterie lingers; but Richard Graves, who long survived them both, won for himself a place in English letters, not lofty, but secure, where none of his friends could excel him.

## CHAPTER XII

### HISTORIANS

#### I

#### HUME AND MODERN HISTORIANS

'As for good [English] historians,' Voltaire wrote in 1734, 'I know of none as yet : a Frenchman [Rapin] has had to write their history<sup>1</sup>.' His criticism was just, and, before him, both Addison and Bolingbroke had noted the backwardness of English literature so far as history was concerned. Yet there was no lack of interest on the part of the educated classes in the history of their own nation, for, during the first half of the eighteenth century, several histories of England appeared which, in spite of gross defects, found many readers. Nor is this interest difficult to account for. Closely connected with the conservatism of the national character, it had been fostered by the conflicts through which the nation had passed in the preceding century ; for, in these conflicts, great respect was shown for precedent ; in the struggle with Charles I, though it was temporarily subversive of ancient institutions, the parliamentary party made constant appeals to historic liberties, while the lawyers and judges on the king's side found weapons in the same armoury and cited records in support of the exercise of arbitrary authority. The process of subversion was sharply checked, and reverence for the ancient constitution was ~~exhibited~~ by the invitation to Cromwell to assume the crown. More lately, the revolution of 1688 had been a vindication of historic rights, conducted with a punctilious observance of time honoured procedure. Principles involved in these conflicts still divided the nation into two opposing parties, and whigs and tories alike were eager to find such support for their opinions as might be derived from history. Whigs, for example, would turn to Oldmixon or

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres*, vol. xxiv, p. 187; see Gibbon's *Memoirs*, p. 295; ed. Hill, G. B.

Rapin, tories to the *History of England* by Thomas Carte, the nonjuror, which though written without literary skill, was superior, as regards the extent of the author's researches, to any English history of an earlier date than that of the appearance of his first two volumes (1747, 1750); his fourth and last volume, which goes down to 1654, was published in 1755, the year after his death; his *Life of James, Duke of Ormond* (1736), a tedious book, is of first-rate importance, especially as regards Irish history. The general interest in English history had been vastly strengthened by the appearance of Clarendon's *History*, which has been treated in a previous volume as belonging essentially to the class of contemporary memoirs, and it had been encouraged by the publication, at the expense of the state, of *Fœdera et Conventiones* (1704—35), edited by Thomas Rymer and Robert Sanderson, in twenty volumes, a collection of public documents of great value for most periods of our history before the seventeenth century, the last document included in it being dated 1654. This work laid a new foundation for the writing of history on a scientific basis, from documentary authorities; its value was thoroughly appreciated by Rapin, who used it in his *History*, and, from time to time, published summaries of its contents which were translated into English under the title *Acta Regia* (1726—7).

Yet this interest did not, as has already been seen, call forth, before Hume wrote, any history of England by a native historian that is worthy to be classed as literature; indeed, it was in itself adverse to the appearance of such a work, for it caused English history to be written for party purposes, and, consequently, no effort was made to write it in a philosophic spirit, or to present it in well devised form or in worthy language; it fell into the hands of hacks or partisans. Only one Englishman of that time wrote history in a style that, of itself, makes his book valuable, and he did not write English history. Simon Ockley, vicar of Swavesey, Cambridgeshire, who had early devoted himself to the study of eastern languages and customs, was appointed professor of Arabic at Cambridge in 1711. The first volume of his *Conquest of Syria, Persia, and Egypt by the Saracens*, generally known as *The History of the Saracens*, appeared in 1708, the second in 1718, with an introduction dated from Cambridge gaol, where he was then imprisoned for debt: he had in past years received help from the earl of Oxford (Harley); but that had ceased, and the poor scholar had a large family. Gibbon, who admired and used his work, speaks of his fate as 'unworthy of the man and of his

country<sup>1</sup>. His *History* extends from the death of Mahomet, 632, to that of the fifth Ommiad caliph, 705 ; it was cut short by the author's death in 1720, after a life of incessant and ill-requited toil. The *Life of Mohammed* prefixed to the third edition of his *History*, which was issued for the benefit of his destitute daughter in 1757, is by Roger Long, master of Pembroke hall, Cambridge. Ockley based his work on an Arabic manuscript in the Bodleian library which later scholars have pronounced less trustworthy than he imagined it to be. His English is pure and simple, his narrative extraordinarily vivid and dramatic, and told in words exactly suited to his subject—whether he is describing how Caulah and her companions kept their Damascene captors at bay until her brother Derar and his horsemen came to deliver them, or telling the tragic story of the death of Hosein. The book was translated into French in 1748, and was long held to be authoritative. As a history, its defects are patent, its account of the conquest of Persia, for example, is so slight that even the decisive battle of Cadesia is not mentioned ; nor is any attempt made to examine the causes of the rapid successes of the Saracen arms : it reads, indeed, more like a collection of sagas than a history. Such defects, however, do not impair its peculiar literary merit.

A change in the character of British historical writing began in the middle of the century ; it was raised by Hume to a foremost place in our prose composition ; its right to that place was maintained by Robertson, and, finally, in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, it rose to the highest degree of perfection that it has ever attained in this, or, perhaps, in any, country. That its two earliest reformers should both have been Scotsmen is one of many illustrations of the activity of the Scots at that time in all the higher spheres of thought and of literary production. When the failure of the Jacobite cause put an end to the struggle for Scottish national life as an independent political force, it would almost seem as though the educated class in Scotland consciously set themselves to endow their country with an independent life in the domains of philosophy, literature, science and art<sup>2</sup> ; for their efforts were not made in isolation ; they were made by men who constantly communicated with each other or consorted together, especially in Edinburgh, where, from 1754, they formed themselves into the 'Select Society,' of which both Hume and Robertson were

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. vi, p. 4, note, ed. Bury, J. B.

<sup>2</sup> Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, vol. iii, p. 871.

members, and which met every week to discuss philosophical questions. While this intellectual life was distinctly national, its output was not marred by its local character. Political affairs had for centuries driven or led Scots abroad: the habit of resorting to other countries remained, and Scottish thinkers and writers kept in touch with the intellectual life of other peoples, and especially of the French, the ancient allies of Scotland. In their mode of expression, too, the desire to be widely read and the necessity of gaining a larger and richer market for their books than they could find at home made them careful to avoid local peculiarities, and write in such a way as would be acceptable to English readers. Though this movement attained its full development during the latter half of the century, it had been in progress for several years.

It was during those years that David Hume first became known as a philosopher and essayist; his earliest book, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739—40), written when he was not more than twenty-eight, met with a chilling reception which gave little promise of his future renown. His metaphysical opinions led him to put a special value on the study of history. As his scepticism limited mental capability to sensible experience, so he regarded past events as affording experience. Holding mankind to be much the same under all conditions, he considered that history, by exhibiting the behaviour of men in the past, enables us to discover the principles of human action and their results, and to order our conduct accordingly: its records are 'so many collections of experiments by which the moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science,' and man obtains a guide for his own conduct. Hume would therefore be drawn to study history, and, believing that a knowledge of it would be of public utility by affording men experience, he would be inclined to record the experiments from which they could derive it. A three years' residence in France from 1734 to 1737, most of it spent 'very agreeably' at La Flèche, on the Loir, then famous for its great Jesuits' college, probably strengthened this inclination and influenced his style. Historical study was being eagerly pursued in France. Among the religious orders, the Benedictines were preparing *Le Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, issuing their *Gallia Christiana*, and beginning their histories of the French provinces, while the Dominicans had produced the *Scriptores* of their order, and the Jesuits were engaged on *Acta Sanctorum*. On the lay side, the *Académie des Inscriptions* was carrying on the publication of

the royal ordinances, and gathering a store of historical erudition<sup>1</sup>. Count de Boulainvilliers had already treated French history in a philosophic spirit, and Voltaire, in his exquisite little *Histoire de Charles XII*, had shown that historical writing might be endowed with literary excellence. A strange contrast Hume must have seen in this activity and accomplishment to the condition of historical work in Great Britain. Elegance in the structure of sentences and an almost excessive purity of language, which marked contemporary French literature, were specially inculcated by the Jesuits, the masters of French education. Hume's *History* shows enough French influence to justify us in considering his long visit to La Flèche as an important factor in its character.

Some insight into the conduct of the great affairs of nations he gained as secretary to general St Clair during his ineffectual expedition against Lorient in 1746, when Hume acted as judge advocate, and while attached to St Clair's embassy to Vienna and Turin in 1748. By 1747, he had 'historical projects.' His appointment as librarian to the faculty of advocates at Edinburgh, in 1752, gave him command of a large library well stocked with historical works, and he forthwith set about his *History of England*. Intending to trace the steps by which, as he believed, the nation had attained its existing system of government, he had at first thought of beginning his work with the accession of Henry VII; for he imagined that the first signs of revolt against the arbitrary power of the crown were to be discerned during the Tudor period, and of carrying it down to the accession of George I. Finally, however, he began with the accession of James I, alleging, as his reason, that the change which took place in public affairs under the Tudor dynasty was 'very insensible,' and that it was 'under James that the House of Commons first began to rear its head, and then the quarrel betwixt privilege and prerogative commenced?' The first volume of his *History of Great Britain*, containing the reigns of James I and Charles I, appeared in 1754. He was sanguine in his expectations of the success of the work; but, though for a few weeks it sold well in Edinburgh, it met with almost universal disapprobation and seemed likely to sink into premature oblivion. Its unfavourable reception was mainly due, as we shall see later, to political reasons. Hume was bitterly disappointed, and even thought of retiring to France and living there under an assumed name. His second volume, which ended

<sup>1</sup> Carré, H., *Histoire de France* (Lavissee), vol. viii, ii, pp. 182—3.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, J. H., *Life of Hume*, vol. i, p. 375.

with the revolution of 1688, and appeared in 1756, was less irritating to whig sensibilities : it sold well and helped the sale of the first. Then he worked backwards, and published two volumes on the Tudor reigns in 1759, ending, in 1761, with two on the history from the time of Julius Caesar to the accession of Henry VII. He did not carry out his original idea of bringing his work down to 1714. By that time, the sale of his *History* had become large, and had made him, he said, 'not merely independent but opulent'; and it kept its place in popular estimation as the best comprehensive work on English history for at least sixty years. The first two published volumes were translated into French in 1760; and, in Paris, where Hume resided from 1763 to 1766, during part of the time as secretary of legation, he received, both as historian and as philosopher, an amount of adulation which excited the spleen of Horace Walpole<sup>1</sup>.

Hume gave so little time to preparation for his task that it is evident that he had no idea of writing a scientific history. With all due allowance for the infinitely greater facilities which now exist for arriving at the truth, it cannot be contended that he took full advantage of such authorities as were then accessible: he seems to have been content with those under his hand in the advocates' library; he was not critical as to their comparative values; and he was careless in his use of them. His *History*, consequently, contains many misstatements which he might have avoided—some of small importance, others of a serious kind, as they affect his conclusions. Of these, a typical instance, noticed by Hallam<sup>2</sup>, is, that he misstates the complaint of the Commons in 1396 that sheriffs were continued in office beyond a year, as a petition that they might be so continued, and uses this mistake in defence of the misgovernment of Richard II.

His later published volumes, on the history before the Tudor dynasty, become more and more superficial as he advances further into times which were obscure to him, in which he took no interest, regarding them as ages of barbarism, and on which he would scarcely have written save for the sake of completeness. What he set out to do was to write a history which would be generally attractive—for he appealed '*ad populum* as well as *ad clerum*'<sup>3</sup>—and would be distinguished from other histories alike by its style and by its freedom from political bias, a matter on which he was insistent in his correspondence. He approached his work, then, in

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, vol. vi, p. 301, ed. Toynbee.

<sup>2</sup> *Middle Ages*, vol. iii, p. 75, ed. 1860.

<sup>3</sup> Hume to Clephane, Burton, vol. i, p. 397.

a spirit of philosophic impartiality, or, at least, believed that he did so—a belief commonly dangerous to a historian—and, throughout its course, adorned it with judgments and reflections admirable in themselves though not always appropriate to facts as they really were. Here, his philosophical treatment ends: he shows no appreciation of the forces which underlay great political or religious movements. As a sceptic, he did not recognise the motives which led men to work for a common end, or the influences which guided them. Such movements were, to him, mere occurrences, or the results of personal temperament, of the ambition, obstinacy, or fanaticism of individuals. The advance of historical study is indebted to him; for his praiseworthy attempts at various divisions of his narrative to expound social and economic conditions were an innovation on the earlier conception of a historian's duty as limited to a record of political events.

Hume's *History* occupies a high place among the few masterpieces of historical composition. His expression is lucid, conveying his meaning in direct and competent terms. It is eminently dignified, and is instinct with the calm atmosphere of a philosophic mind which surveys and criticises men and affairs as from an eminence. Its general tone is ironical, the tone of a man conscious of intellectual superiority to those whose faults and follies he relates. His sentences are highly polished; they are well balanced and their cadence is musical. They are never jerky, and they flow on in a seemingly inevitable sequence. Their polish does not suggest elaboration; their beauties, so easy is Hume's style, appear careless and natural. In fact, however, he made many corrections in his manuscript; he was anxious to avoid Scotticisms and, in a careful revision of the first edition of his earlier volumes, removed all he detected. Johnson, with his usual prejudice against Scotsmen, declared, he 'does not write English, the structure of his sentences is French.' Though this was a conversational exaggeration, it was more deliberately echoed by Lord Mansfield, and it is so far true that Hume's easy style indicates French influence, and, as Horace Walpole observed, the influence of Voltaire. The same may be said of the style of other contemporary Scottish writers, of Robertson, Adam Smith and Ferguson. While he never falls below dignity, he never rises to eloquence. The prose of his age was generally colourless, and his abhorrence of enthusiasm of every kind rendered this greyness of tone especially appropriate as a vehicle of his thoughts. Yet, though elegance rather than vigour is to be looked for in his writing, its irony gives it a force which, at

the least, is as powerful as any which could be obtained by a more robust style. His excellences are not without their defects. Charmed, at first, by the polish of his sentences, the reader may, perhaps, soon find them cold, hard and monotonous ; and since historical narrative will not excite sustained interest unless it appeals to the imagination and emotions as well as to the judgment, Hume's attitude of philosophic observer and dispassionate critic may become wearisome to him and, as he discovers that the philosopher is not free from prejudice, even irritating. In the composition of his *History*, Hume shows in a remarkable degree a skill which may be described as dramatic : when working up to some critical event, he selects and arranges his facts, so that each leads us a step further towards the climax that he has in view ; he tells us nothing that is extraneous to his immediate purpose ; there is no anticipation and no divagation in his narrative.

In spite of his belief in his own impartiality, Hume was justly accused of tory prejudice, and this caused the ill-success of his first published volume. He did not, of course, regard the royal authority as founded on divine appointment any more than on contract. As a utilitarian, he held that the end of government was the promotion of the public good, and that monarchy was based on the necessity of escape from lawless violence. While he admitted that resistance to sovereignty might be justifiable, he considered this doctrine so dangerous to society, as opening the door to popular excesses, that it should be concealed from the people unless the sovereign drove his subjects from their allegiance. This theory affected his view of the Stewart period. Ignorant of common law, as a Scotsman might well be, and of earlier English history, and inclined to scepticism, he failed to recognise the fundamental liberties of the nation. To him, they were 'privileges,' more or less dependent on the will and strength of the monarch ; they had no common foundation in the spirit of the people, there was no general 'scheme of liberty.' He held that, at the accession of James I, the monarchy was regarded as absolute, and that, though Charles pushed the exercise of the prerogative too far, it was practically almost unlimited. The parliament made encroachments upon it : Charles defended his lawful position. Hume did not undervalue the liberties for which the parliamentary party contended, but he blamed them for the steps by which they asserted and secured them. His opinions were probably affected by his dislike of the puritans as much as by his erroneous theory of constitutional history : 'my views of things,' he wrote, 'are more

conformable to Whig principles, my representations of persons to Tory prejudices.' His scepticism led him to sneer at a profession of religious motives. To the church of England in Charles's reign, he 'accorded his approval as a bulwark of order, and, possibly, because in his own day it afforded many examples of religious indifference; and, including all the sects under the common appellation of puritans, he condemned them as 'infected with a wretched fanaticism' and as enemies to free thought and polite letters. The extent to which his prejudices coloured his treatment of the reign of Charles I may be illustrated by his remarks on the penalties inflicted by the Star chamber and by his sneer at the reverence paid to the memory of Sir John Eliot, 'who happened to die while in custody.'

His second volume was not so offensive to the whigs, for he held that limitations to the prerogative had been determined by the rebellion, and that Charles II and James II tried to override them. In his treatment of the reign of Elizabeth, his misconception of the constitution again came to the front and again caused offence; for he regarded the queen's arbitrary words and actions as proofs that it was an established rule that the prerogative should not be questioned in parliament, and that it was generally allowed that the monarchy was absolute. The same theory influenced his treatment of some earlier reigns, especially those of Henry III, Edward II and Richard II. His contempt for the Middle Ages as a rude and turbulent period, which he derived from, or shared with, Voltaire encouraged his error. Quarrels between kings and their subjects might result in diminutions of monarchical powers, but, in such barbarous times, no system of liberty could have been established. No one now reads Hume's *History*, though our more conscientious and more enlightened historians might learn much from it as regards the form in which the results of their labours should be presented: its defects in matter, therefore, are of little consequence, while its dignity, its masterly composition and its excellence of expression render it a literary achievement of the highest order.

In 1759, William Robertson, a presbyterian minister of Edinburgh, published his *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of James VI until his Accession to the Crown of England*, in two volumes: it was received with general applause and had a large sale. Robertson was rewarded by his appointment as principal of Edinburgh university in 1762, and as historiographer royal. In 1769 appeared his *History of Charles V* in

three volumes, for which he received £4500, a larger sum than had ever been paid for a historical work : it brought him an European reputation ; it was translated into French in 1771 ; Voltaire declared that it made him forget his woes, and Catherine II of Russia, who sent him a gold snuff-box, that it was her constant travelling companion. His *History of America*, in two volumes, recording the voyages of discovery, conquests and settlements of the Spaniards, was published in 1771, and, in 1791, his *Disquisition concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients had of India*.

Robertson paid more attention to authorities than Hume did, but sometimes misunderstood them, besides being uncritical, and apt to be superficial. Like Hume, he comments on events in a philosophic strain ; but his comments are often commonplace, and, like Hume, too, he fails to appreciate the forces at work in great social or political movements. Nevertheless, he had the historic sense in a measure given to none of his contemporaries before Gibbon : he had some idea of the interdependence of events and of the unity of history as one long drama of human progress to which even checks in this direction or that contribute fresh forces. His *History of Scotland* is remarkably fair, though, here and elsewhere, he shows a strong protestant bias : his mistaken view of the character and aims of Esme Stewart, earl of Lennox, is probably connected with the earl's 'firm adhesion to the protestant faith.' In common with Hume, he did not satisfy the more ardent admirers of Mary, queen of Scots ; and, in reply to both, William Tytler, a writer to the signet and a member of the Select Society, wrote his *Inquiry as to the Evidence* against her, in two volumes (1760), which passed through four editions and was twice translated into French. Before him, Walter Goodall, the advocates' sublibrarian, had defended her in his *Examination of the [Casket] Letters &c.*, in two volumes (1754), an ingenious book, proving that the French versions of the letters were translated ; and so the endless dispute began.

Robertson's *Charles V* opens with a view of the 'Progress of Society during the Middle Ages,' which Hallam praises highly and Carlyle, in boyhood, found inspiring. His misrepresentation of the state of learning, especially among the clergy, from the eighth to the eleventh century, has been exposed by Maitland<sup>1</sup> : it illustrates the contempt with which he, in common with Hume, regarded the Middle Ages, his careless use of authorities, his tendency to hasty generalisation and his religious bias. Other defects might be pointed out, but, though his review can no longer

<sup>1</sup> *Dark Ages, passim.*

\*be regarded as authoritative, it is interesting and meritorious as the earliest attempt made by a British historian to present, on a large scale, a general view of history. In his work on the emperor's reign, his record of events, though insufficient and, occasionally, inaccurate, is, on the whole, more trustworthy than his estimate of their significance or of the characters and conduct of the chief actors in them. His erroneous description of the emperor's life at Yuste, as withdrawn from this world's affairs, is due to the authorities he used: in his day, access had not been allowed to the records at Simancas which have enabled later writers to give a very different account of it.

Robertson's style, in its lucidity, polish and signs of French influence, has a strong likeness to that of Hume: his sentences are well balanced, they lack Hume's ironic tone, but seem more alive than his. They are more sonorous, and often end with some word or words of weighty sound and Latin derivation, as when, speaking of the feeling of the English against queen Mary, he says, 'they grasped at suspicions and probabilities as if they had been irrefragable demonstrations.' Robertson's 'verbiage' and use of big words, illustrated in this sentence, Johnson humorously declared to have been learnt from him<sup>1</sup>. Some development may be discerned in his writing: passages in his *Charles V* show that he was beginning to write history with an animation of which there is little sign in his *Scotland*, and this tendency ripened in his *America* into a faculty for rhetorical narrative finely displayed in his description of the voyage and landing of Columbus and some other passages. As history, his *America* is now of small value, for it is based on insufficient authorities, but, nevertheless, it is delightful to read. His books were, at least at first, more popular than Hume's *History*: as the work of a minister of religion, they did not alarm religious people, many of whom regarded all that Hume wrote as likely to be dangerous: his style was more attractive to simple folk, and they were impressed by the evidences of his learning in directions wholly beyond their knowledge. 'Hume's friendship with his younger rival<sup>2</sup>, and the cordial admiration which Gibbon expressed for both of them<sup>3</sup>, are among the pleasing incidents in our literary history.

The works of Hume and Robertson seem to have excited other Scotsmen to write history. 'I believe,' Hume wrote in 1770, 'this

<sup>1</sup> Boswell, *Life*, vol. III, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, *Life*, vol. II, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, *Autobiography*, p. 122, ed. Hill, G. B.; Dugald Stewart, *Life of Robertson*, p. 267.

is the true historical age and this the historical nation : I know no less than eight Histories on the stocks in this country<sup>1</sup>.’ The letter which begins with these words refers especially to a *History of England* by Robert Henry, an Edinburgh minister, in six volumes, of which the first appeared in 1771, and which ends with the death of Henry VIII. It is arranged under various headings, as political and military affairs, religion, commerce, and so forth ; and its interest lies in the assertion, already, though not so strongly, made in Hume’s *History*, that history is concerned with all sides of social life in the past. It is mainly written from second-hand authorities and is inordinately dull. Nevertheless, its comprehensiveness made it popular : it brought its author £3300 and a crown pension of £100 and was translated into French.

The character of the historical work of Sir David Dalrymple or Lord Hailes, the title he took as a Scottish judge (1766), was determined by professional instinct. He edited two small volumes of documents belonging respectively to the reigns of James I and Charles I, and compiled *Annals of Scotland from the Accession of Malcolm III to the Accession of the House of Stewart*, in two volumes (1776, 1779). This book contains an accurate and bare record of events, impartially stated, supported by references to authorities, and illustrated in footnotes and appendixes. Hailes, though one of the Select Society, was more closely connected with Johnson than with his fellow members. Johnson read the proofs of the *Annals* and praised its ‘stability of dates’ and its ‘punctuality of citation,’ though it had not ‘that painted form which is the taste of the age’—a hit at Robertson—but also aptly described it as a ‘Dictionary’ containing ‘mere dry particulars.’ Hailes’s attack on Gibbon is noticed in the next chapter<sup>2</sup>.

Another Dalrymple, Sir John, of Cranstoun, a baronet, and, later, a judge, who was also a member of the Select Society, and had written an essay on feudal property, produced his *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* from 1684 to 1692, in two parts (1771—8), beginning with a review of affairs from 1660. The appendixes to his chapters contain a mass of previously unpublished political correspondence of first-rate importance on which he based his work. His first volume caused much stir, for it revealed the extent to which English politics, in the reign of Charles II, had been influenced by French intrigues, and disgusted the whigs by exhibiting Sidney’s acceptance of money from Barillon. Dalrymple wrote in a pompous strain, and Johnson ridiculed his ‘foppery’

<sup>1</sup> Letters to Strahan, pp. 155 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. XIII, post.

and 'bouncing style'. He continued his work, in a new edition (1790), to the capture of the French and Spanish fleets at Vigo.

Another history, which may have been 'on the stocks' in Scotland in 1770, is Robert Watson's *History of the Reign of Philip II*, published in two volumes in 1777, the year of its author's promotion as principal of St Salvator's college, St Andrews. It contains a full and careful account of the revolt of the Netherlands, derived from van Meteren, Bentivoglio and Grotius, but its comparatively scanty notices of other Spanish affairs and of the foreign policy of Philip II are unsatisfactory<sup>2</sup>. Watson's style is similar, though inferior to Robertson's: his sentences are generally well balanced, but some are less skilfully constructed; he is verbose, and, though his narrative shows a perception of the things which appeal to the emotions, it lacks emotional expression. Horace Walpole greatly admired his book<sup>3</sup>, which passed through several editions and was translated into French, German and Dutch. At the time of his death in 1781, Watson was engaged on a *History of Philip III*, which was completed by William Thomson, a prolific Scottish writer.

Incursions into the field of history were made by two English authors of the governing class. Walpole's *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III* (1768) is an attempt to show that Richard was probably innocent of the crimes imputed to him by Lancastrian writers. Sir George Buck<sup>4</sup>, Carte and William Guthrie, whose *History of England to 1688* in four volumes (1744—51) was little read and is of no importance, had, in different degrees, anticipated him; but Walpole was the first to argue the case with skill. He got it up well, his points are clearly put, and his pleading is witty and readable. The question has been revived and adequately discussed in our own day. Some of the accusations which Walpole criticises are no longer maintained by competent historians, but Walpole could not (nor can any one) show sufficient cause for doubting that Richard had part, at least, in the murder of Henry VI, that he put Hastings to death without a trial and that he murdered his nephews. Walpole was much pleased with his own book and bitterly resented adverse criticism from Hume<sup>5</sup> and others<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Boswell, *Life*, vol. II, pp. 210, 237; vol. V, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> Forneron, H., *Histoire de Philippe II* (1881), vol. I, p. 392, says that, with Gregorio Leti, Watson contributed most to substitute legend for fact in the history of Philip II.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, vol. I, p. 224.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ante*, vol. VII, p. 448.

<sup>5</sup> In *Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne*. See Walpole, *Short Notes of My Life*.

<sup>6</sup> See bibliography.

George, first baron Lyttelton, a second rate whig statesman, whose active interest in other departments of literature is noticed elsewhere<sup>1</sup>, worked intermittently for some thirty years at his *History of the Life of Henry II*, which he produced, in three volumes, in 1767. The whole work, Johnson records, was printed twice over and a great part of it three times, 'his ambitious accuracy' costing him at least £1000<sup>2</sup>. He used the best authorities he could find, and gives a minute and accurate account of the political events of Henry's reign, together with remarks not always according to knowledge on its constitutional and legal aspects. His style is clear, but remarkably flat, his narrative inanimate, and his reflections, in which 'Divine Providence' frequently appears, are often almost childish. His opinions on the constitution in the twelfth century flattered whig sentiment. Hume jeered at his whiggery and his piety; Johnson was offended by his whiggery; and Gibbon, referring to a review of the book which he had written in *Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne*, declared that the public had ratified his judgment that the author's 'sense and learning were not illuminated by a single ray of genius<sup>3</sup>.' Horace Walpole's remark, 'How dull one may be if one will but take pains for six or seven and twenty years together!', is just, though, as work conscientiously and, to some extent, efficiently done, the book deserves some kinder comment. Lyttelton was a patron of poorer authors, and among those he befriended was Archibald Bower, a Scot, who wrote for booksellers. Bower asserted that he had been a Jesuit and a counsellor of the inquisition in Italy, that he had escaped and had become a protestant. Between 1748 and 1753, he issued to numerous subscribers three volumes of a *History of the Popes* written with a great show of learning and ending at 757. Through Lyttelton's influence, he was appointed librarian to the queen (1748), and clerk of the buck-warrants (1754). In 1756—8, however, John Douglas, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, published proofs that Bower's account of himself was false, and that his volumes, text and references, were stolen from other authors, two-thirds of his first volume being practically translated from Tillemont<sup>4</sup>. He defended himself vigorously so far as his own story was concerned, and gradually completed his *History* in seven volumes, the seventh going down to 1758, but disposing of the history from 1600 onwards in twenty-six pages. The book,

<sup>1</sup> See chap. v, ante.

<sup>2</sup> *Lives of the Poets*.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 178—4, ed. Hill, G. B.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, vol. vii, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> See bibliography as to Gibbon's debt to Tillemont, cf. chap. xiii, post.

which was avowedly written against the claims of the see of Rome, has no literary merit. Bower, though an impudent impostor, had some learning, but his last four volumes are not of historical importance, and the reputation of his *History* did not survive Douglas's attack.

History was written as hackwork by two authors of eminent genius. Tobias George Smollett was hired to write a history to rival Hume's work, of which the first two volumes had then appeared, and, in 1757, he produced his *Compleat History of England* to 1748, in four volumes, written in fourteen months. He boasts of having consulted over three hundred books. When he began to write, he had 'a warm side' to whig principles; but he changed his opinions as he proceeded. The *History* sold well, and Hume, while contemptuous, was annoyed at his rivalry<sup>1</sup>. Smollett wrote a continuation; the part from the revolution was revised and republished as a continuation of Hume's *History* and, as such, passed through several editions. It favours the tory side and is written in a robust and unaffected style. Oliver Goldsmith, in the preface to his *History of England* to 1760, in four volumes (1771), disclaims any attempt at research, and says that 'he wrote to instruct beginners and to refresh the minds of the aged, and 'not to add to our historical knowledge but to contract it.' In matter, his *History* is indebted to Hume. Both it and his two smaller books on the same subject are written in the charming and graceful style which makes all his prose works delightful. The smaller books, at least, were extensively used in education within the last seventy years. Neither Smollett, though he took his *History* seriously, nor Goldsmith should be considered as a historian.

Ireland found its historian at home. Thomas Leland, senior fellow of Trinity college, Dublin, wrote a *History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II*, ending with the treaty of Limerick (1691), which was published in 1773 in three volumes. Though he consulted some original authorities, he founded his work, after losing the guidance of Giraldus, mainly on those of Ware, Camden, Stanihurst, Cox and Carte, noting his authorities in his margins though without precise references. He writes in a lucid, straightforward, but inanimate style, and, though some of his statements and comments are capable of correction by modern scholars, his narrative, as a whole, is accurate, sober and impartial. *The History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, from 1745 to 1761, by Robert Orme, published in two volumes

<sup>1</sup> Burton, J. H., *Life*, vol. II, p. 58.

(the second in two 'sections') in 1763—78, is a contemporary memoir, for Orme was in India in the company's service during practically the whole time of which he wrote. It is a record of noble deeds written with picturesque details, and in dignified and natural language appropriate to its subject. Its accuracy in all important matters is unquestionable<sup>1</sup>. It is too full of minor events which, however interesting in themselves, bewilder a reader not thoroughly acquainted with the history. Nor does it lay sufficient stress on events of the first magnitude. To this defect, all contemporary memoirs are, relatively, liable, and, in Orme's case, it is heightened by his excessive minuteness. It has been observed that he errs in treating the native princes rather than the French 'as principals in the story.' This, which would be a fault in a later history, is interesting in Orme's book, as it shows the aspect under which affairs appeared to a competent observer on the spot. William Russell's *History of Modern Europe*, from the time of Clovis to 1763, in five volumes (1779—86), is creditable to its author, who began life as an apprentice to a bookseller and printer, and became 'reader' for William Strahan, the publisher of the works of Gibbon, Hume, Robertson and other historians. Its sole interest consists in Russell's idea that Europe, as a whole, has a history which should be written by pursuing what he calls 'a great line.' He was not the man to write it: his book is badly constructed; far too large a space is given to English history; there are strange omissions in his narrative and several blunders.

Together with the development of historical writing, this period saw a remarkable increase in the publication of materials for it in the form of state papers and correspondence. The share taken by Lord Hailes and Sir John Dalrymple in this movement is noticed above. A third volume of Carte's *Ormond*, published in 1735, the year before the publication of the two containing the duke's *Life*, consists of a mass of original letters to which he refers in the *Life*. A portion of the *State Papers of the Earl of Clarendon* was published in three volumes by the university of Oxford in 1767. The publication of the *Thurloe Papers* by Thomas Birch has already been noted in this work<sup>2</sup>. Birch, rector of St Margaret Pattens, London, and Depden, Suffolk, did much historical work, scenting out manuscript authorities with the eagerness of 'a young setting dog.' His more important productions are *An Inquiry into the Share which Charles I had in the Transactions of the Earl of Glamorgan* (1747), in answer to Carte's contention in his

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *Essay on Clive*.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. VII, pp. 187—8.

*Ormond* that the commission to the earl was not genuine; *Negotiations between the Courts of England, France, and Brussels, 1592—1617* (1749); *Memoirs of the Reign of Elizabeth* from 1581 (1754), mainly extracts from the papers of Anthony Bacon at Lambeth; and *Lives of Henry, prince of Wales and archbishop Tillotson*. At the time of his death (1766), he was preparing for press miscellaneous correspondence of the times of James I and Charles I. This interesting collection presenting the news of the day has been published in four volumes, two for each reign, under the title *Court and Times* etc. (1848). Birch, though a lively talker was a dull writer; but his work is valuable. He was a friend of the family of lord chancellor Hardwicke, who presented him to seven benefices.

The second earl of Hardwicke shared Birch's historical taste, and, in 1778, published anonymously *Miscellaneous State Papers, from 1501 to 1726*, in two volumes, a collection of importance compiled from the manuscripts of lord chancellor Somers. In 1774, Joseph Maccormick, a St Andrews minister, published the *State Papers and Letters* left by his great-uncle William Carstares, private secretary to William III, material invaluable for Scottish history in his reign, and prefixed a life of Carstares. The manuscripts left by Carte were used by James Macpherson, of Ossianic fame, in his *Original Papers*, from 1660 to 1714, in two volumes (1775). In the first part are extracts from papers purporting to belong to a life of James II written by himself, Carte's extracts being supplemented by Macpherson from papers in the Scottish college at Paris. The second part contains Hanover papers, mostly extracts from the papers of Robethon, private secretary to George II, now in the British Museum; the copies are accurate, but some of the translations are careless<sup>1</sup>. Also, in 1775, he produced a *History of Great Britain* during the same period, in two volumes, which is based on the papers, and is strongly tory in character. For this, he received £3000. His style is marked by a constant recurrence of short and somewhat abrupt sentences. Both his *History* and his *Papers* annoyed the whigs, especially by exhibiting the intrigues of leading statesmen of the revolution with the court of St Germain<sup>2</sup>. His *Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) contains boldly asserted and wildly erroneous

<sup>1</sup> For the James II papers and their relation to the *Life of James II*, ed. Clarke, J. S., 1816, see Ranke, *History of England* (Eng. trans.), vol. vi, pp. 29 ff., and, for the Hanover papers, Chance, J. F., in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* vol. xiii (1898), pp. 55 ff. and pp. 538 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Horace Walpole, *Last Journals*, vol. i, pp. 444—5, ed. Stuart, A. F.

theories, particularly on ethnology, inspired by a spirit of excessive Celticism.

Much interest was excited by the speculations of the French *philosophes*, in some measure the literary offspring of Locke and enthusiastic admirers of the British constitution. Influenced by Montesquieu's famous *Esprit des Lois* (1748), Adam Ferguson, Hume's successor as advocates' librarian (1757) and then a professor of philosophy at Edinburgh, published his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767). Hume advised that it should not be published, but it was much praised, was largely sold and was translated into German and French. Nevertheless, Hume's judgment was sound; the book is plausible and superficial<sup>1</sup>. It is written in the polished and balanced style of which Hume was the master<sup>2</sup>. The admiration expressed on the continent for the British constitution led Jean Louis Delolme, a citizen of Geneva, who came to England about 1769, to write an account of it in French which was published at Amsterdam in 1771. An English translation, probably not by the author, with three additional chapters, was published in London in 1775, with the title *The Constitution of England*; it had a large sale both here and in French and German translations abroad, and was held in high repute for many years. Delolme was a careful observer of our political institutions and, as a foreigner, marked some points in them likely to escape the notice of those familiar with them from childhood. The fundamental error of his book is that it regards the constitution as a nicely adjusted machine in which the action of each part is controlled by another, instead of recognising that any one of the 'powers' within it was capable of development at the expense of the others<sup>3</sup>; though, even as he wrote, within hearing of mobs shouting for 'Wilkes and Liberty,' one of them, the 'power of the people,' was entering on a period of development. To him, the outward form of the constitution was everything: he praised its stability and the system of counterpoises which, he believed, assured its permanence, so long as the Commons did not refuse supplies; he failed to see that it was built up by living forces any one of which might acquire new power or lose something of what it already had, and so disturb the balance which he represented as its special characteristic and safeguard.

<sup>1</sup> Stephen, Sir L., *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. II, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Ferguson's *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* is noticed in the following chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen, *u.s.* 209—214.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HISTORIANS

#### II

#### GIBBON

THE mind of Gibbon, like that of Pope, from which, in many respects, it widely differed, was a perfect type of the literary mind proper. By this, it is not meant that either the historian or the poet was without literary defects of his own, or of weaknesses—one might almost say obliquities—of judgment or temperament which could not fail to affect the character of his writings. But, like Pope and very few others among great English men of letters, Gibbon had recognised, very early in his life, the nature of the task to the execution of which it was to be devoted, and steadily pursued the path chosen by him till the goal had been reached which he had long and steadily kept in view<sup>1</sup>. Like Pope, again, Gibbon, in the first instance, was virtually self-educated; the intellectual education with which he provided himself was more conscientious and thorough, as, in its results, it was more productive, than that which many matured systems of mental training succeed in imparting. The causes of his extraordinary literary success have to be sought, not only or mainly in the activity and the concentration of his powers—for these elements of success he had in common with many writers, who remained half-educated as well as self-educated—but, above all, in the discernment which accompanied these qualities. He was endowed with an inborn tendency to reject the allurements of hand-to-mouth knowledge and claptrap style, and to follow with unfaltering determination the guidance which study and reason had led him to select. Thus,

<sup>1</sup> His statement (*Memoirs*, ed. Hill, G. Birkbeck—the edition cited throughout this chapter—p. 195) that 'he never presumed to accept a place,' with Hume and Robertson, 'in the triumvirate of British historians' may be taken *cum grano*.

as culminating in the production of his great work, Gibbon's literary labours were very harmonious, and, so far as this can be asserted of any performance outside the field of pure literature, complete in themselves. While carrying them on, he experienced the periods of difficulty and doubt which no worker is spared; but, though the flame flickered at times, it soon recovered its steady luminosity. After transcribing the caliph Abdalrahman's reflection, how, in a reign of fifty years of unsurpassed grandeur, he had numbered but fourteen days of pure and genuine happiness, he adds in a note:

If I may speak of myself (the only person of whom I can speak with certainty) *my* happy hours have far exceeded the scanty numbers of the caliph of Spain; and I shall not scruple to add, that many of them are due to the pleasing labour of the present composition<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, while he was continuously engaged in occupations which never ceased to stimulate his energies and to invigorate his powers, he was also fortunate enough to achieve the great work which proved the sum of his life's labours, to identify himself and his fame with one great book, and to die with his intellectual task done. Macaulay, the one English historian whose literary genius can be drawn into comparison with Gibbon's, left the history of England which he had 'purposed to write from the accession of King James II down to a time which is within the memory of men living' a noble fragment. Gibbon could lay down his pen, in a summer-house in his garden at Lausanne, 'in the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787,' after writing this final sentence of his completed book:

It was among the ruins of the Capitol, that I first conceived the idea of a work which has amused and exercised near twenty years of my life; and which, however inadequate to my own wishes, I finally deliver to the curiosity and candour of the public<sup>2</sup>.

Though what Gibbon calls 'the curiosity of the public' may have exhausted itself long since, the candid judgment of many generations and of almost every class of readers has confirmed the opinion formed at once by Gibbon's own age. His great work remains an enduring monument of research, an imperishable literary possession and one of the highest encouragements to intellectual endeavour that can be found in the history of letters.

The facts of Gibbon's life—in themselves neither numerous nor startling—are related by him in an autobiography which,

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, chap. LII.

<sup>2</sup> *Of. Memoirs*, p. 225.

by general consent, has established itself as one of the most fascinating books of its class in English literature. This is the more remarkable, since the *Memoirs of My Life and Writings*, as they were first printed by Gibbon's intimate friend the first earl of Sheffield (John Baker Holroyd), who made no pretence of concealing his editorial method, were a *cento* put together out of six, or, strictly speaking, seven, more or less fragmentary sketches written at different times by the author<sup>1</sup>. Lord Sheffield was aided in his task (to what extent has been disputed) by his daughter Maria Josepha (afterwards Lady Stanley of Alderley), described by Gibbon himself as 'a most extraordinary young woman,' and certainly one of the brightest that ever put pen to paper. The material on which they worked was excellent in its way, and their treatment of it extraordinarily skilful; so that a third member of this delightful family, Lord Sheffield's sister 'Serena,' expressed the opinion of many generations of readers in writing of the *Memoirs*: 'They make me feel affectionate to Mr Gibbon<sup>2</sup>.' The charm of Gibbon's manner as an autobiographer and, in a lesser degree, as a letter-writer, lies not only in his inexhaustible vivacity of mind, but, above all, in his gift of self-revelation, which is not obscured for long either by over-elaboration of style or by affectation of *chic* (such as his more than filial effusions to his stepmother or his facetious epistles to his friend Holroyd occasionally display). Out of all this wealth of matter, we must content ourselves here with abstracting only a few necessary data.

Edward Gibbon, born at Putney-on-Thames on 27 April 1737, came of a family of ancient descent<sup>3</sup>, tory principles and ample income. His grandfather, a city merchant, had seen his wealth engulfed in the South Sea abyss—it was only very wise great men, like Sir Robert Walpole, or very cautious small men, like Pope,

<sup>1</sup> For details, see bibliography. Frederic Harrison, in *Proceedings of the Gibbon Commemoration* (1895), describes the whole as 'a *pot-pourri* concocted out of the MS with great skill and tact, but with the most daring freedom.' He calculates that possibly one-third of the MS was not printed at all by Lord Sheffield. The whole series of autobiographical sketches are now in print. Rowland Prothero, in a note in his edition of *Private Letters of Edward Gibbon* (1758–94)—the edition cited throughout this chapter as *Letters*—vol. i, p. 155, shows, by the example of a letter (no. xxxiii) patched together by Lord Sheffield out of five extending over a period of six months, that he applied the same method to the *Letters* published by him in 1814.

<sup>2</sup> *The Girlhood of Maria Josepha Holroyd*, ed. Adeane, Jane, p. 373.

<sup>3</sup> The Gibbons were connected, among others, with the Actons, and Edward Gibbon, the historian's father, was a kinsman of the great-grandfather of the late Lord Acton.

who knew when to withdraw from the brink ; but he had realised a second fortune, which he left to a son who, in due course, became a tory member of parliament and a London alderman. Edward, a weakly child—so weakly that ‘in the baptism of each of my brothers my father’s prudence successively repeated my Christian name... that, in case of the departure of the eldest son, this patronymic appellation might still be perpetuated in the family’, was, after two years at a preparatory school at Kingston-upon-Thames, sent to the most famous seminary of the day, Westminster school. But, though he lodged in College street at the boarding-house of his favourite ‘Aunt Kitty’ (Catherine Porten), the school, as readers of Cowper do not need to be reminded, was ill-suited to so tender a nursling ; and Gibbon remained a stranger to its studies almost as much as to its recreations. More than this—he tells us, in words that have been frequently quoted, how he is

tempted to enter a protest against the trite and lavish praise of the happiness of our boyish years, which is echoed with so much affectation in the world. That happiness I have never known, that time I have never regretted<sup>2</sup>.

Yet, even his boyhood had its enjoyments, and the best of these was, also, the most enduring. His reading, though private, was carried on with enthusiasm, and, before he was sixteen, he had, in something more than outline, covered at least a large part of the ground which he afterwards surveyed in *The Decline and Fall*<sup>3</sup>. Before, however, his boyhood was really over, his studies were suddenly arrested by his entry, as a gentleman-commoner, at Magdalen college, Oxford, on 3 April 1752. No passage of his *Memoirs* has been more frequently quoted than his account of his *Alma Mater*, whom, if not actually ‘dissolved in port,’ he found content with the leavings of an obsolete system of studies, varied by prolonged convivialities, tinged, in their turn, by way of sentiment, with a futile Jacobitism<sup>4</sup>. The authorities of his college made no pretence of making up by religious training for the neglect of scholarship. He was, he says, forced by the ‘incredible neglect’ of his tutors to ‘grope his way for himself’ ; and the immediate result was that, on 8 June 1753, he was

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, all his five brothers died in infancy.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Morison, J. C., *Gibbon* (English Men of Letters), pp. 4–5.

<sup>4</sup> For comparison pictures of the intellectual barrenness of Oxford in the period 1761–92, see *Memoirs*, appendix 15, where Sir James Stephen’s account of Cambridge in 1812–16 is also cited.

received into the church of Rome by a Jesuit named Baker, one of the chaplains to the Sardinian legation, and that, in the same month, his connection with Oxford came to an abrupt close. He had, at that time, barely completed his sixteenth year; but he tells us that, 'from his childhood, he had been fond of religious disputation.'

No. sooner had Gibbon left Oxford than his taste for study returned, and he essayed original composition in an essay on the chronology of the age of Sesostris. But the situation had another side for a 'practical' man like the elder Gibbon, who might well view with alarm the worldly consequences entailed, at that time, by conversion to Roman catholicism. He seems to have tried the effect upon his son of the society of David Mallet, a second-rate writer patronised in turn by Pope, Bolingbroke and Hume. But Mallet's philosophy 'rather scandalised than reclaimed' the convert, and threats availed as little as arguments. For, as he confesses, in his inimitable way, he 'cherished a secret hope that his father would not be able or willing to effect his menaces,' while 'the pride of conscience' encouraged the youth 'to sustain the honourable and important part which he was now acting.' Accordingly, change of scene (and of environment) was resolved upon as the only remedy left. In June 1753, he was sent by his father to Lausanne, where he was settled under the roof and tuition of a Calvinist minister named Pavillard, who afterwards described to Lord Sheffield 'the astonishment with which he gazed on Mr Gibbon standing before him: a thin little figure' (time was to render the first epithet inappropriate), 'with a large head, disputing and urging, with the greatest ability, all the best arguments that had ever been used in favour of Popery<sup>1</sup>.'

To Lausanne, Gibbon became so attached that, after he had returned thither in the days of his maturity and established reputation, it became, in Byron's words<sup>2</sup> one of

the abodes

Of names which unto [them] bequeath'd a name.

His Swiss tutor's treatment of him was both kindly and discreet, and, without grave difficulty, weaned the young man's mind from the form of faith to which he had tendered his allegiance.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 2, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Childe Harold*, canto III, st. 105. For an account of Lausanne and the Gibbon relics there and elsewhere, see Read, Meredith, *Historic Studies in Vaud, Berne and Savoy*, 2 vols. 1897: vol. II in especial.

In matters spiritual, Gibbon inclined rather to frivolity than to deliberate change; nor was this the only illustration of a disposition of mind 'clear' as the air and 'light' like the soil of Attica, and one in which some of the highest and of the deepest feelings alike failed to take root. It is, at the same time, absurd to waste indignation (as, for instance, Schlosser has done) upon his abandonment of an early engagement to a lady of great beauty and charm, Suzanne Curchod, who afterwards became the wife of the celebrated Necker. The real cause of the rupture was the veto of his father, upon whom he was wholly dependent, and whose decision neither of the lovers could ignore<sup>1</sup>.

Gibbon did not leave Lausanne till April 1758. During his five years' sojourn there, his life had been the very reverse of that of a recluse—a character to which, indeed, he never made any pretension. As yet, he had not reached his intellectual manhood; nor is it easy to decide in what degree a steadfast ambition had already taken possession of him. Though his reading was various, it was neither purposeless nor unsystematic. He brought home with him, as the fruit of his studies, a work which was in every sense that of a beginner, but, at the same time, not ill calculated to attract the public. Before sending it to the printer, however, he cheerfully took the experienced advice of Paul Maty, editor of *The New Review*, and entirely recast it. The very circumstance that Gibbon's *Essai sur l'Étude de la Littérature*, published in 1761, was written in French shows under what influences it had been composed and to what kind of readers it was primarily addressed. Its purpose is one more defence of classical literature and history, the study of which was then out of fashion in France; but, though the idea is good, the style lacks naturalness—a defect due to the youthfulness of the writer far more than to the fact of his having written his treatise in a foreign tongue; for he had already acquired a mastery over French which he retained through life.

Before, however, he had entered the lists as an English author, he had passed through a different, but by no means barren, experience of life. A few days before the publication of his essay,

<sup>1</sup> A full account of their relations from first to last, characteristic of both the man and the age, will be found in an editorial note to *Letters*, vol. i, p. 40, and cf. *ibid.* vol. i, p. 81, note, as to 'the last phase.' In June 1794, Maria Josepha wrote: 'I thought I had told you that Madame Necker had the satisfaction of going out of the world with the knowledge of being Mr Gibbon's First and Only love' (*Girlhood*, p. 288). The passage in the *Memoirs* referring to Gibbon's renunciation of his engagement, was, as F. Harrison shows, unscrupulously recast by Lord Sheffield.

• he joined the Hampshire militia, in which, for two years, he held in succession the rank of captain, major and colonel, and became, practically, the commander of a smart 'independent corps of 476 officers and men,' whose encampment on Winchester downs, on one occasion, at least, lasted four months, so that for twice that period he never took a book into his hands. His predilection for military history and the accounts of marches and campaigns was of old standing, and afterwards reflected itself in many passages of his historical masterpiece.

There cannot be any reason for doubting his statement that, during all this time, he was looking to the future rather than to the present, and that the conviction was gaining upon him of the time having arrived for beginning his proper career in life. It was in the direction of history that Gibbon's reading had lain almost since he had been able to read at all; and, by 1760 or thereabouts, Hume and Robertson were already before the world as historical writers who commanded its applause, and the reproach of having failed to reach the level of Italian and French achievement in this branch of literature could no longer be held to rest upon English writers. Gibbon, as a matter of course, was familiar with the chief historical productions of Voltaire, and, during his visit to Paris, in 1763, became personally acquainted with more than one French historian of note<sup>1</sup>. Thus, he could not fail to agree with Hume that 'this was the historical age<sup>2</sup>.' But, though he had no doubt as to the field of literature in which it behoved him to engage, he hesitated for some time with regard to the particular historical subject upon which he should fix his choice. Charles VIII's Italian expedition (which subject he rejected for the good reason that it was rather the introduction to great events than important in itself), the English barons' war, a Plutarchian parallel between Henry V and Titus and the biographies of more than one British worthy—that of Sir Walter Raleigh in especial—attracted him in turn. Gradually, he arrived at the conclusion that the theme chosen by him must not be narrow, and must not be English. The history of Swiss liberty, and that of Florence under the Medici, hereupon, for a time, busied his imagination—  
• the former, he afterwards actually began, in French, but abandoned after, in 1767—8, the first book of it had been read to 'a literary society of foreigners in London,' and unfavourably received by

• <sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 185 ff., cf. appendix 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Hume* to Strachan, p. 155, cited *ibid.* appendix 31.

them<sup>1</sup>. But if, like Milton, he was embarrassed by the wealth of themes which presented themselves to his literary imagination, he ended, again like Milton, by choosing what, in its development, proved the grandest and noblest of them all.

Soon after the disbandment of the militia on the close of the war in 1763, he paid a long visit to the continent, spending some time in Paris and then in Lausanne, where, during the better part of a year, he prepared himself for a sojourn in Italy by a severe course of archaeological study<sup>2</sup>. He crossed the Italian frontier in April 1764, and reached Rome in October. Here, on the 15th of that month, as he records in a passage which is one of the landmarks of historical literature, it was

—as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed fryars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind<sup>3</sup>.

For, as he adds, the conception of his life's work was, at first, confined within these limits, and only gradually grew in his mind into the vaster scheme which he actually carried into execution. We shall, perhaps, not err in attributing a direct incitement towards this expansion to the title, if not to the substance, of Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et leur décadence* (1734), which, to a mind like Gibbon's, already occupied with part of the theme, could hardly fail to suggest such an achievement as that to which, in the end, his genius proved capable of rising<sup>4</sup>.

Still, a long interval separates the original conception of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* from the execution of even its first instalment. During the years 1756 to 1764, he produced a series of miscellaneous historical writings, which, in part, may be described as preliminary studies for the great work of which the design had now dawned upon him. Some of them were in the synoptical form for which he always had a special predilection, characteristic of a mind desirous, with all its inclination to detail, of securing as wide as possible a grasp of the theme on which it was engaged—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Morison, J. C., *Gibbon*, pp. 38—40; and see, as to *Introduction à l'Histoire Générale de la République des Suisses*, *Memoirs*, pp. 171—2. This fragment, on a theme which has more fitfully than enduringly attracted the attention of English historians, is largely based on Tschudi. It is printed in vol. III of *The Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon* (1814 ed.).

<sup>2</sup> Morison, J. C., *Gibbon*, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> The similarity in title, and the difference in design, are well pointed out in the preface to the 1776 edition of the German translation of *The Decline and Fall* by Wenck, F. A. W.

e.g. the first of the whole series, *Outlines of the History of the World—The Ninth Century to the Fifteenth inclusive*. Others were of the nature of small monographs, showing Gibbon's complementary interest in close and accurate investigations—such as *Critical Enquiries concerning the Title of Charles the Eighth to the Crown of Naples* (1761)<sup>1</sup>. To a rather later date belongs the review (in French) (1768) of Horace Walpole's *Historic Doubts*<sup>2</sup>, which treats this celebrated *tour de force* politely, but as a striking, rather than convincing, piece of work and ends with arguments derived from Hume, showing that the *sentiment général* on the subject represents the better grounded conclusion<sup>3</sup>. We pass by the classical studies belonging to the same period (1762 to 1770)<sup>4</sup>, noting only the long collection of French 'minutes' taken from the *magnum opus* of Cluverius in 1763 and 1764, as a preparation for his Italian tour, and entitled *Nomina Gentesque Antiquae Italiae*, and the wellknown *Observations on the Design of the VIth Book of the Aeneid*, Gibbon's first larger effort in English prose. The attack which the latter piece makes upon Warburton's hypothesis, that Vergil's picture symbolises the mystic conception of ancient religion, is very spirited; but modern scholarship is in this instance in sympathy with the theory denounced<sup>5</sup>. During the greater part of the year 1770, in which these *Observations* appeared (and in which Gibbon also put to paper some *Remarks on Blackstone's Commentaries*), Gibbon's father was afflicted by an illness which, in November, proved fatal; yet the coincidence of this illness with a long interval of silence in the letters addressed by 'Junius' to *The Public Advertiser* and to its printer has been made the starting-point of a theory that Gibbon was the author of the famous *Letters*<sup>6</sup>!

The death of Gibbon's father involved the son in a mass of uncongenial business, and, in the end, he found himself far from being a wealthy man. Still, he had saved enough from the wreck to be able, in the autumn of 1772, to establish himself in London, where he found easy access to the materials which he needed for the progress of his great work, together with the stimulus, which he could ill spare, of intellectual society in club and

<sup>1</sup> The French introduction to the intended Swiss *History* has been already noted.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., as to this, chap. XII, *ante*.

<sup>3</sup> For all these, see vol. III of *Miscellaneous Works*.

<sup>4</sup> For all these, see *ibid.* vol. IV.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Morison, J. C., *Gibbon*, p. 29. The *Observations* are printed in vol. IV, the *Remarks on Blackstone* in vol. V, of *Miscellaneous Works*.

<sup>6</sup> See Smith, James, *Junius Unveiled* (1909).

drawing-room<sup>1</sup>. In 1774, he entered the House of Commons, and, two years later, the first volume of *The Decline and Fall* was published.

The success of his political venture, in itself, was moderate; but he has recorded that 'the eight sessions that I sat in parliament were a school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of an historian<sup>2</sup>'. Although, while sitting for Liskeard till 1781 and then for Lymington till 1783, he remained a silent member, he voted steadily for Lord North's government and, afterwards, adhered to him in his coalition with Fox. In 1779, he was rewarded for his public fidelity by a commissionership of trade and plantations<sup>3</sup>, which he held till its abolition in 1782. The salary of the office was of much importance to him<sup>4</sup>; indeed, he thought himself unable to live in England without it, and when, on its suppression, he was disappointed in his hopes of other official employment, he, in the year before the downfall of the coalition, 'left the sinking ship and swam ashore on a plank<sup>5</sup>.' In truth, Gibbon was so conscious of his complete lack of the requisite gifts that (as he apologetically confesses) he rapidly relinquished the 'fleeting illusive hope of success in the parliamentary arena.' He was, however, persuaded, by Lords Thurlow and Weymouth, to indite, in the shape of a *Mémoire Justificatif* (1778), a reply to an official vindication by the government of Louis XVI of its conduct towards Great Britain. This paper, which denounces the intervention of the French government in Great Britain's quarrel with her American colonies, and the delusive Spanish offer of mediation, is a state manifesto rather than a diplomatic document, and resembles some of the publicistic efforts put forth a generation later by Gentz—if not the productions of Gentz's model, Burke<sup>6</sup>.

While the political phase of his career, as a whole, was lame and self-ended, the first instalment of his great historical work, of which vol. I was published on 17 February 1776, took the town by storm; nor has *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ever ceased to hold the commanding position in the world of letters which it occupied at the outset.

<sup>1</sup> 'I never found my mind more vigorous, nor my composition more happy, than in the winter hurry of society and parliament.' *Memoirs*, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> For the doggerel, attributed to Fox, commenting on this appointment, see *Letters*, vol. I, p. 354.

<sup>4</sup> See his letter to Edward (afterwards Lord) Elliot (1779) in *Memoirs*, appendix 43.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.* appendix 47 (*Letters*, vol. II, p. 92).

<sup>6</sup> It is printed in *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. V.

He had produced the first portion of his work in a more leisurely way than that in which he composed the five succeeding volumes, on each of which he spent about a couple of years; and everything in the circumstances of its publication pointed to a fair success. But the actual reception of the volume very far surpassed the modest expectations entertained by him just before its issue, when, as he avers, he was 'neither elated by the ambition of fame, nor depressed by the apprehension of contempt<sup>1</sup>.' He felt conscious of his essential accuracy, of the sufficiency of his reading, of his being in accord with the spirit of enlightenment characteristic of his age and of the splendour, as well as the attractiveness, of his theme. Yet the triumph was not the less sweet; and he confesses himself 'at a loss to describe the success of the work without betraying the vanity of the writer.' Three editions were rapidly exhausted; Madame Necker brought him her congratulations in person; and when, in the following year, he returned her visit at Paris, the world of fashion (which, more entirely here than in London, covered the world of letters) was at his feet. At home, Hume wrote him a letter which 'overpaid the labour of ten years,' and Robertson's commendations were equally sincere. Other historians and scholars added their praise; and, when it proved, for a time, that he had provoked the susceptibilities of religious orthodoxy, without calling forth the cavils of 'profane' critics, he was satisfied.

It will be most convenient to enumerate at once the chief attacks to which *The Decline and Fall* gave rise, without separating the earlier from the later. In a scornful review of antagonists, victory over whom he professes to regard as a sufficient humiliation, and whose 'rewards in this world' he proceeds to recite<sup>2</sup>, Gibbon declares that 'the earliest of them was, in this respect, neglected.' Although this was not strictly true<sup>3</sup>, it suggests a just estimate of James Chelsum's *Remarks on the Two Last Chapters of Mr Gibbon's History* (1776), a pamphlet not discourteous in tone, but devoid of force. Gibbon was probably less touched by this tract and by the sermons of Thomas Randolph, another Oxford divine, directed against his fifteenth chapter, than by *An Apology for Christianity in a Series of Letters*

<sup>1</sup> Cf., as to the reception of vol. i, *Memoirs*, pp. 194—9, where Hume's letter is printed at length.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 202 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Chelsum held three benefices and was chaplain to two bishops, besides being preacher at Whitehall. See *ibid.* appendix 39, which contains a notice of several of Gibbon's censors.

to *Edward Gibbon* (1776), by Richard Watson, regius professor of divinity at Cambridge, afterwards bishop of Llandaff, the polished character of whose style he feels himself bound to acknowledge. What is even more notable in Watson's *Apology* (which was afterwards reprinted with a companion *Apology for the Bible*, in answer to Thomas Paine), is the tolerance of tone observable in the general conduct of his argument, as well as in such a passage as that acknowledging Voltaire's services to Christianity in the repression of bigotry. The criticism of Gibbon's use of insinuation is telling, and in the last letter the appeal, not to Gibbon, but to that section of the public which, so to speak, was on the look-out for religious difficulties obstructing the acceptance of the Christian faith—is both skilful and impressive. Passing by *Letters on the Prevalence of Christianity before its Civil establishment* by East Apthorpe (on whom archbishop Cornwallis promptly bestowed a city living), and Smyth Loftus's *Reply to the Reasonings of Mr Gibbon* (whose mention of 'a Theological answer written by a mere Irish parson' seems to apply to this effort), both printed in 1778<sup>1</sup>, we come to a publication of the same year, which at last moved Gibbon to break the silence hitherto opposed by him to the assailants of his first volume, or, rather, of the portion of it which had treated of the progress of early Christianity. Henry Edwards Davis, a young Oxonian, in his *Examination of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of Mr Gibbon's History etc.* (1778), set about his task in the ardent spirit of a reviewer fresh to the warpath, and, after attempting to convict the author of *The Decline and Fall* of misrepresentation (including misquotation) of a number of—mainly Latin—writers, launched forth into the still more nebulous sphere of charges of plagiarism from Middleton, Barbeyrac, Dodwell and others—curiously enough tracing only a single passage to Tillemont<sup>2</sup> as its source. Davis's *Examination* is of the sort which small critics have at all times applied to writers whether great or small, and, in this as in other instances, it succeeded in stinging. In *A Vindication of some Passages in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters* (1779)<sup>3</sup>, after declaring that Davis's accusations, as touching the historian's honour, had extorted from him a notice which he had

<sup>1</sup> *An Enquiry into the Belief of the Christians of the first three centuries respecting the Godhead* by William Burgh, author of three volumes of *Political Disquisitions* (1773—5), belongs to the same year.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ante*, chap. xii and *post*, p. 314, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in vol. iv of *Miscellaneous Works*.

refused to more honourable foes, he defended himself, with indisputable and, in point of fact, undisputed success, against the indictment preferred against him, and took advantage of the occasion to reply, without losing his temper, to 'the theological champions who have signalized their ardour to break a lance against the shield of a *Pagan* adversary.' The defence served its purpose, and he did not find any necessity for renewing it. As his great work progressed, a second series of censors took up their parable against it.\* In 1781, Henry Taylor, a divine of the 'intellectual' school, in his *Thoughts on the Nature of the Grand Apostacy and Observations* on Gibbon's still-vested fifteenth chapter, sought, while deprecating the historian's sneers, to show that he aimed not at the essence, but only at the particulars of his subject; and Joseph Milner, a mystically disposed evangelical who wrote ecclesiastical history with the intent of illustrating the display of Christian virtues, and whom Gibbon set down as a fool, published his *Gibbon's Account of Christianity considered etc.* In the following year, John Priestley, in the second volume of his *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* joined issue with Gibbon, whom he charged with representing the immediate causes of the spread of the Christian religion as having been themselves effects<sup>1</sup>. In 1784, Joseph White, in the third of a set of Bampton lectures delivered at Oxford, returned to the subject of Gibbon's 'five causes,' which the critic conceived to be 'in reality unconnected with any divine interposition'; in the same year, a special point—intended, of course, as a test-point—concerning Gibbon's trustworthiness was raised by George Travis, archdeacon of Chester, in his *Letters to Edward Gibbon* in defence of the disputed verse (St John's *First Epistle*, chap. v, v. 7) introducing the three heavenly witnesses. The attack drew down upon its unfortunate author a series of replies by Richard Porson, which have been classed with the controversial criticism of Bentley; but, although satisfactorily vindicated as to the main issue of the dispute, Gibbon cannot have regarded his champion's intervention with feelings of unmixed gratitude. Travis's arguments were confounded; but Porson's criticism of the writer whom Travis had attacked has survived:

I confess I see nothing wrong in Mr Gibbon's attack upon Christianity. It proceeded, I doubt not, from the purest and most virtuous motives. We can only blame him for carrying on the attack in an insidious manner, and with imperfect weapons<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> As to Priestley and his point of view, see vol. xi.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Mr Archdeacon Travis* (1790), preface, p. xxix.

and there follows a literary judgment of the great historian's style—and, incidentally, of his ethics—to which further reference must be made below, and which, while full of wit, is, in some respects, not more witty than true. A more formidable censor than archdeacon Travis appeared, in 1782, in the person of Lord Hailes (Sir David Dalrymple), of whose own contributions to historical literature some mention was made in the previous chapter of this work. Much of the logic of *An Inquiry into the Secondary Causes which Mr Gibbon has assigned for the Rapid Growth of Christianity* (1778)—which is at once straightforward in form and temperate in tone—is irrefutable; and Gibbon was sagacious enough to allow that, possibly, some flaws were discovered in his work by his legal critic, to whose accuracy as a historian he goes out of his way to pay a compliment<sup>1</sup>. Finally, after, in a university sermon at Cambridge (1790), Thomas Edwards had referred, as to a formidable enemy, to a writer whose work 'can perish only with the language itself,' John Whitaker, of whose *History of Manchester* notice will be taken below, and who seems to have been actuated by recent private *pique*<sup>2</sup>, published, in 1791, a series of criticisms begun by him in *The English Review*, in October 1788, under the title *Gibbon's History etc., in Vols. IV. V. and VI. reviewed*. In this tractate, Gibbon's supposed lack of veracity is traced back to the lack of probity stated to be shown by him already in the earlier portions of his work; and his absorption of other writers' materials is held up to blame together with the frequent inelegance of his style. The general method of Whitaker's attack can only be described by the word 'nagging'; at the close, he gathers up the innumerable charges into a grand denunciation of the historian as another Miltonic Belial, imposing but hollow, pleasing to the outward sense but incapable of high thoughts.

This summary account of the attacks upon *The Decline and Fall* published in the lifetime of its author at least illustrates the narrowness of the limits within which the sea of criticism was, after all, almost entirely confined. Gibbon's treatment of them, on the other hand, shows how little importance he attached to such censure except when it impugned his general qualifications as a historian. How little he cared for immediate applause is

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> See Lord Sheffield's note in *Misc. Works*, vol. i, p. 243, where it is stated that Whitaker had written very amiable letters to Gibbon after perusing chapters xv and xvi.

shown by the fact that, though the popular welcome extended to his second and third volumes (1781) was, at first, fainter, it was only now that he finally resolved to carry on the work from the fall of the western to that of the eastern empire—an interval of about a thousand years. Not long afterwards, he at last made up his mind to exchange conditions of existence which, as he asserts, had become wearisome to him and which he, certainly, could no longer afford to meet, for the freedom of a purely literary life; and, in the autumn of 1783, he broke up his London establishment and carried out the long-cherished plan of settling with his tried friend George Deyverdun<sup>1</sup> at Lausanne. Here, in a retirement which was anything but 'cloistered,' he, by the end of 1787, brought to a close the main work of his life, of which the three concluding volumes (iv—vi) were carried by him to England and published in April 1788. The passage in the *Memoirs* relating the historian's actual accomplishment of his task is one of the commonplaces of English literature, and records one of the golden moments which redeem the endless tale of disappointments and failures in the annals of authorship.

After, in 1788, Gibbon had again returned to Lausanne, where, in the following year, he lost the faithful Deyverdun, he made up his mind—once more setting an example which but few men of letters have found themselves able to follow—to undertake no other great work, but to confine himself henceforth to essays or 'Historical excursions?'. It was as one of these that he designed his *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick*. What he wrote of this work amounts to more than a fragment<sup>2</sup>; for, of the three divisions contemplated by him, the first (*The Italian Descent*) and part of the second (*The German Reign*), were actually carried out, though the third (*The British Succession of the House of Brunswick*), for which Gibbon could have but very imperfectly commanded the material preserved in Hanover and at home, was not even approached by him. Whatever temporary value Gibbon's treatment of the material amassed by Leibniz and Muratori might have possessed vanished with the tardy publication, in 1842, of Leibniz's own *Annales imperii occidentis Brunsvicenses*. But

<sup>1</sup> It was with Deyverdun that, in 1768, Gibbon had brought out in London the French literary annual called *Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne pour les Années 1767 et 1768*, to which he contributed, with other articles, a review of Lyttelton's *History of Henry II*, 'that voluminous work, in which sense and learning are not illuminated by a ray of genius.' (*Memoirs*, pp. 178—4.)

<sup>2</sup> See the letter to Langer, in *Letters*, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> See *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. III.

Gibbon's narrative has a few purple patches, nor would posterity willingly forego the tribute which, near its opening, he pays to 'the genius and unparalleled intellect' of Leibniz, as well as to the industry and critical ability of the indefatigable Italian scholar with whom the great German was associated in his researches.

In 1791, Gibbon bade farewell to Lausanne, and the rest of his life was spent in England, where he almost continuously enjoyed the paternal hospitality of his most intimate English friend, the earl of Sheffield (John Baker Holroyd), at Sheffield place, Sussex, and in London. Lord Sheffield's name is as enduringly associated with that of the great historian as Boswell's is with Johnson's, but in a more equal way—as is shown by Lord Sheffield's unique treatment of Gibbon's *Memoirs* and by his admirable posthumous editions of the *Miscellaneous Works*. The last addition which Gibbon lived to make to these, the *Address* recommending the publication of *Scriptores Rerum Anglicanarum*, under the editorship of the Scottish antiquarian and historian John Pinkerton—a noble design which was to remain long unaccomplished—was interrupted by death<sup>1</sup>. Thus, his last literary effort appropriately directed itself to the promotion of historical research. He died on 16 January 1794, and was buried in the Sheffield mausoleum in Fletching church, by the side 'of his dear friend, we may almost say, of his brother by adoption<sup>2</sup>.' In the *Memoirs*, which he left behind him as the best monument of his long literary life, he confesses himself 'disgusted with the affectation of men of letters, who complain that they have renounced a substance for a shadow; and that their fame (which sometimes is no insupportable weight) affords a poor compensation for envy, censure, and persecution<sup>3</sup>.' Whatever crowning grace Gibbon's life may have missed, it brought him a long intellectual triumph and a fame which the course of time has left undimmed.

Gibbon declared, as has been seen, that he 'never presumed to accept a place in the British triumvirate of historians'; but succeeding generations have concurred in assigning to *The Decline and Fall* the primacy, which it still holds, among historical works in our literature, and in esteeming its author the most brilliant example known of 'the union of the historian and the man of

<sup>1</sup> It is printed, with an explanatory appendix by Pinkerton, in vol. III of *Miscellaneous Works*.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, Frederic, *u.s.*

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 241.

letters<sup>1</sup>. From the ancients, he had taken over the rhetorical side of the historian's task; from the French, he had derived the treatment of historical materials by a scientific method of criticism and selection; from the French, too, with the assistance of Hume and Robertson, he had learnt how to combine scientific method with artistic effect. His literary art may suffer from mannerisms, which were those of his age, as well as from foibles, which were his own, and, as a scientific history, his work has, in many respects, become superannuated; but its main and distinctive qualities continue unimpaired. Is it possible to indicate, in a few words, of which, among these qualities, the importance seems paramount?

In the first place, his choice of subject—as it gradually developed itself in the progress of the work—was supremely felicitous; for it is the greatest theme furnished by profane history. Even before Gibbon could feel assured that the complete treatment of the whole subject would be compassed by himself, he already contemplated it in its unity<sup>2</sup>. What the Roman empire was, after it had attained to its full strength and maturity, and how its western division verged gradually to its decline and downfall, is only half the story; the other and much longer half shows how its fall was followed by long centuries of life in the eastern, and a revival, in new conditions, of its existence in the western, world. And more than this: Janus-like, the historian is constrained to turn, with one face, to the Roman commonwealth out of which the empire grew and of which it never lost the impress; while, with his other face, he looks forward to modern times. He bids us consider, not only what it was that declined and fell, but, also, what grew into life. The new elements of movement, the rise of new national, and that of new religious, powers must all be reviewed in their twofold relation to what they superseded and to what they prepared. The migration and settlements of the Teutonic tribes, and the spread and establishment of the Christian, and, after it, of the Mohammadan, religion, must be treated not only as helping to break up the Roman empire, but, also, as cooperating in the new order of things. The principle of the continuity of history, Freeman's favourite theme, is, as the latest editor of Gibbon reminds us,

not the least important aspect of *The Decline and Fall*. . . . On the continuity of the Roman Empire depended the unity of Gibbon's work . . . whatever names of contempt he might apply to the institution in the days of the decline<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Bury, J. B., preface to the 1909 edn., p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> See the outline of the scheme in the preface to vol. I dated 1 February 1776.

<sup>3</sup> Bury, *u.s.*

Thus, the historian essays to narrate how the ancient world became the modern, just as the mausoleum of Hadrian became the papal fastness of St Angelo—or, in his own characteristic words<sup>1</sup>, to 'describe the triumph of barbarism and religion.'

The capabilities of the subject, then, are of surpassing greatness; yet the mind is able to grasp it as a whole. Here, we have no mere series of annals, such as were presented even by the excellent Tillemont, to whom Gibbon was indebted for much of his material<sup>2</sup>, but a complete work. Its opening chapters may fall short of the results of modern numismatical and epigraphical research; its later portions, which cover a relatively far larger ground, may show an inadequate command of the political life of the Byzantine empire and all but ignore much of the Slavonic side of its history, may inadequately appreciate the historic significance, or the individual grandeur, of the figure of Charles the great and may fail in the narration of the second and third crusades<sup>3</sup>—in a word, it may need to be supplemented, repaired or changed here and there, and again and again. But it is complete even though it is imperfect. Eminent historians—Guizot, Milman, Bury—have, therefore, been willing to become Gibbon's editors and commentators; but they have not dealt with him as he dealt with Tillemont. It is as a whole that his work has maintained the position which it conquered for itself at once in historical literature.

Inspired, as it were, by the muse of history herself in the magnificence of his choice of subject and in the grandeur of his determination to treat it with a completeness in harmony with its nature, Gibbon displayed a breadth of grasp and a lucidity of exposition such as very few historians have brought to the performance of a cognate task. Whether in tracing the origin and growth of a new religion, such as Mohammadanism, or in developing in comprehensive outline the idea of Roman jurisprudence<sup>4</sup>, the masterly clearness of his treatment is equal to the demands of his philosophic insight; nor does the imaginative power of the historian fall short of the consummate skill of the literary artist.

But there is another requirement which the historian, whatever may be his theme, is called upon to satisfy, and which, in plain

<sup>1</sup> Bury, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Tillemont, *Le Nain de, Histoire des Empereurs* etc., treats each successive reign in a series of short chapters or headed articles, with notes appended on a wide variety of points, in the way that Gibbon loved. It reaches to the death of the emperor Anastasius, A.D. 518. His *Mémoires Ecclésiastiques* cover the first six centuries of the Christian era. As to Gibbon's debt to him, see Bury, *u.s.* p. ix.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.* pp. xix—xxi; Morison, *Gibbon*, pp. 162—5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bury, pp. xiii and xiv.

truth, is antecedent to all others. Any work claiming to be a contribution to historical knowledge should, within the limits of human fallibility and the boundaries at different times confining human knowledge, be exactly truthful. It was on this head only that Gibbon avowed himself sensitive, and on this alone that he condescended to reply to antagonists of any sort. It is worse than needless to attempt to distinguish between the infinitely numerous shades of inaccuracy; and Gibbon would have scorned any such endeavour. His defence, of which, in the opinion of those capable of rising above the method adopted by more than one of his censors, the validity is indisputable, is a real vindication. He allows that a critical eye may discover in his work some loose and general references. But he fairly asks whether, inasmuch as their proportion to the whole body of his statements is quite inconsiderable, they can be held to warrant the accusation brought against him. Nor is he unsuccessful in explaining the circumstances which, in the instances impugned, rendered greater precision of statement impossible. The charge of plagiarism—the last infirmity of sagacious critics—he rebuts with conspicuous success, and courageously upholds his unhesitating plea of *not guilty*:

If my readers are satisfied with the form, the colours, the new arrangement which I have given to the labours of my predecessors, they may perhaps consider me not as a contemptible thief, but as an honest and industrious manufacturer, who has fairly procured the raw materials, and worked them up with a laudable degree of skill and success<sup>1</sup>.

The verdict of modern historical criticism has approved his plea. 'If,' writes Bury, 'we take into account the vast range of his work, his accuracy is amazing, and, with all his disadvantages, his slips are singularly few<sup>2</sup>.' It is an objection of very secondary importance, though one to which even experienced writers are wont to expose themselves, that Gibbon is apt to indulge in what might almost be called a parade of authorities.

Complete, lucid and accurate, Gibbon, finally, is one of the great masters of English prose. His power of narrative is at least equalled by his gift of argumentative statement, and, in all parts of his work, his style is one which holds the reader spell-bound by its stately dignity, relieved by a curious subtlety of *nuance*, and which, at the same time, is the writer's own as much as is that of Clarendon, Macaulay or Carlyle. Gibbon's long sentences, which, at times, extend over a whole paragraph or page, but are never involved, resemble neither those of Johnson nor those of Robertson; if his style is to be compared to that of any

<sup>1</sup> *Vindication* (*Miscellaneous Works*, vol. xv, p. 588).

<sup>2</sup> *u.s.* p. ix.

other master of English prose, it is to Burke's. Built with admirable skill and precision, his sentences are coloured by a delicate choice of words and permeated by a delightful suggestion of rhythm in each case—too pleasing to seem the effect of design. Gibbon's irony differs greatly from that of Swift, who deliberately fools his reader and, thereby, increases the enjoyment that arises from the perception of his real meaning, and still more from that of Carlyle, the savage purpose of whose sarcasm never leaves the reader in doubt. The irony of Gibbon is almost always refined, but not at any time obscure. It reveals itself in the choice of an epithet, in the substitution of a noun of more ordinary usage for another of a more select class; it also appears in the inversion of the order in which, commonly, reasons are assigned or motives suggested, and often makes use of that most dangerous of all rhetorical devices—insinuation. This, however, already carries us beyond mere questions of style. Where this insinuation is directed against assumed ethical principles, it has been admirably characterised<sup>1</sup> 'as sub-cynical.'

Gibbon's diction, it may be added, was not formed on native models only; yet it would be in the highest degree unjust to describe it as Gallicising. His fine taste preserved him from the affectation of special turns or tricks of style not due to the individuality of a writer, but largely consisting in idioms borrowed from a tongue whose genius is not that of ours. Much as Gibbon, who, from an early date, wrote French with perfect ease and clearness, owed to that language and literature in the formation of his style as well as in his general manner as a historian, he merely assimilated these elements to others which he could claim as native. Notwithstanding the powerful presentment of the case by Taine<sup>2</sup>, the influence of French works upon the style of English historians has probably been overrated. In the first place, the 'triumvirate' Hume, Robertson and Gibbon should not be 'lumped' together from the point of view of style any more than from other more or less adjacent points of view. The style of Hume, in some measure, was influenced by his reading of French philosophers, and that of Gibbon by his reading of the works of this and of other French literary schools—the sequence of great pulpit orators among them; in the style of Robertson, it is difficult to see much influence of French prose of any sort.

<sup>1</sup> By Frederic Harrison, *u.s.* Horace Walpole paid to Gibbon's style the compliment: 'he never tires me.' Coleridge thought it 'detestable.' (*Memoirs*, appendix 27.)

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, vol. iv, p. 230 (edn. 1866).

And, if we are to trace the genesis of Gibbon's prose style, we should take care, while allowing for French, not altogether to disregard native influences. Gibbon, as is well known, was a great admirer of Fielding, to whom (as it would seem, erroneously) he ascribed kinship with the house of Habsburg; and, though there can be no question of comparing the style of the great novelist to that of the great historian, it may be pointed out how Fielding, like Gibbon, excels in passages holding the mean between narrative and oratorical prose, and how, among great writers of the period, he alone (except, perhaps, in a somewhat different fashion, Goldsmith) shares with Gibbon that art of subdued irony which it was sought alone to characterise. Gibbon, then, has much of the magnificence of Burke, of the incisiveness of Hume and of the serene humour of Fielding, in addition to the ease and lucidity of the French writers who had been the companions of his youthful studies. The faults of his style have been summarised, once for all, in the celebrated passage in Porson's exposure of Travis which has already been cited<sup>1</sup>; they consist, in the first instance, of a want of terseness, and, at the same time, a want of proportion, to which our age is more sensitive than was Gibbon's; he sometimes, says Porson, in Shakespearean phrase, 'draws out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument'; while, on other occasions, he recalls Foote's auctioneer, 'whose manner was so inimitably fine that he had as much to say upon a ribbon as a Raphael.' The other fault reprehended by Porson we may imitate Gibbon himself in veiling under the transparent cover of a foreign tongue—it is, in the scathing words of Sainte-Beuve<sup>2</sup>, *une obscénité érudite et froide*.

Concerning yet another, and more comprehensive charge against Gibbon, on which, as has been seen, critic after critic, returning again and again to the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, thought it necessary to insist, we need, in conclusion, say little or nothing. The day has passed for censuring him because, in this part of his work, he chose to dwell upon what he described as the secondary causes of the progress of the Christian religion, and the community which professed it, from the days of Nero to those of Constantine. Such a selection of causes he had a right to make; nor did he ask his readers to shut their eyes to the cardinal fact, as stated by Milman<sup>3</sup>, that, 'in the Christian

<sup>1</sup> It is reprinted in Watson, J. S., *Life of Porson* (1861), p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Birkbeck Hill in preface to *Memoirs*, p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to edition of 1872, with notes by Milman and Guizot, p. xiii.

dispensation as in the material world, it is as the First Great Cause<sup>1</sup> that the Deity is most undeniably present.' Even the manner in which, in his first volume, at all events, he chose to speak of men and institutions surrounded by traditional romance cannot be made the basis of any charge against him as a historical writer. But it is quite obvious to any candid student of *The Decline and Fall* that its author had no sympathy with human nature in its exceptional moral developments—in a word, that his work was written, not only without enthusiasm, but with a conscious distrust, which his age shared to the full, of enthusiasts. Unlike Hume, who was at one with Gibbon in this distrust, the latter remained, in this respect, master of himself, and did not allow antipathies against those who stood on one side to excite his sympathies with those on the other. He would have treated the puritan movement in the spirit in which Hume treated it, and have had as little wish to penetrate into its depths, as, in contemporary politics, he tried to understand the early aspirations of the French revolution. But he would not, it may be supposed, have drawn a sympathetic picture of king Charles I—for it would be unjust to him to ascribe to any such mental process the conception of Julian the apostate, whereby he scandalised the orthodox. Nothing in the historian's own idiosyncrasy responds to the passions which transform the lives of men and nations; and, to him, history, in his own words<sup>1</sup>, is 'little more than the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind.' This limitation deprives the greatest of English historical works of a charm which is more than a charm, and the absence of which, however legitimate it seemed to the historian himself, cannot be ignored by his readers.

Though Gibbon overtops all contemporary English historical writers who concerned themselves with ancient history—in the sense in which it long remained customary to employ the term—it may be well to note in this place a few of the more important productions in this field by lesser writers. The general public was not supplied with many nutritious droppings from academical tables, still largely supplied with the same 'classical' fare; and, in the field of ancient history in particular, its illpaid labourers had, like Oliver Goldsmith, to turn out as best they might a 'popular' history of Greece or of Rome. Meanwhile, the demands of a more fastidious section of readers for more elaborate works on ancient

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Bury, *u.s.* p. xxi.

history were by no means clamorous. The great success of Conyers Middleton's *History of the Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero* (1741) had proved, as an exception, how barren this branch of classical work had hitherto remained, and, albeit he was a voluminous writer<sup>1</sup>, his other publications of this class had been, in the main, ancillary to his historical *magnum opus*. Though he describes it in his preface as a 'life and times' rather than a 'life' of his hero, it is constructed on biographical lines, and contributed in its way to nourish the single-minded devotion to Cicero, as a politician hardly less than as a writer, which, at a later date, was to suffer ruthless shocks. Nor should another production be passed by, which was directly due to its author's unwillingness to remain content with the French Jesuit history of Rome that had hitherto commanded the field, supplemented by the more discursive writings of Aubert de Vertot and Basil Kennett. Nathaniel Hooke, the friend of Pope from his youth to the hour of his death, dedicated to the poet the first volume of his *Roman History from the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth*, which appeared in 1738, though the fourth and concluding volume was not published till 1771, eight years after the author's death. Hooke also wrote *Observations on the Roman Senate* (1758); but he is best known as the literary editor of the famous *Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough* (1742). His *Roman History*, though, of course, obsolete, especially in its earliest sections (as to the chronology of which he falls in with the chronological conclusions of Newton), is written clearly and simply; moreover, his sympathies are broad, and, though his narrative may, at times, lack proportion, it shows that he had a heart for the *plebs* and could judge generously of Julius Cæsar.

It was in far broader fashion, as became a Scottish professor of moral philosophy, that Adam Ferguson proyed his interest in the more extended view of historical study which was engaging the attention of British, as well as French, writers. Something was said in our previous chapter of his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767). Thus, when, in 1783, Ferguson published his chief work, *The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic*, it was with no narrow conception of his task that he undertook what, as its title indicates, was designed as a sort of introductory supplement to Gibbon's masterpiece. The preliminary survey of the course of Roman

<sup>1</sup> A full bibliography of Middleton will be found in vol. 1 of his *Miscellaneous Works* (2nd edn. 1756). Cf., as to his place among scholars, *ante*, vol. ix, chap. xiii.

history from the origins, though done with care and with due attention to historical geography, is, necessarily, inadequate, and some portions of what follows, avowedly, serve only to inform us as to what the Romans themselves believed to be a true narrative. His sketches of character are the reverse of paradoxical, though after recounting the enormities of Tiberius, he grieves 'to acknowledge that he was a man of considerable ability<sup>1</sup>.'

In the year (1784) following that of the publication of Ferguson's *Roman History* appeared the first volume of William Mitford's *History of Greece*, a venture upon what was then, in English historical literature, almost untrodden ground. Gibbon had suggested the enterprise to Mitford, who was his brother-officer in the south-Hampshire militia and had published a treatise on the military force of England, and the militia in particular. Mitford's *History*, which was not completed till 1810, long held the field, and only succumbed to works of enduring value. It is only necessary to glance at Macaulay's early article on the work<sup>2</sup>, in order to recognise that, in the midst of his partisan cavils<sup>3</sup>—in spite, too, of shortcomings of historical criticism particularly obvious in the account of the heroic age—Mitford displays an apprehension of the grandeur of the theme on which he is engaged. He is prejudiced, but not unconscientious; and, from his frequently perverse conclusions, many an English student has been able to disentangle his first conception of Greek free citizenship.

Finally, John Whitaker, who plays a rather sorry part at the fag-end of the list of Gibbon's assailants, is more worthily remembered as author of *The History of Manchester*. Of this he produced only the first two books (1771—5)—dealing respectively with the Roman and Roman-British, and with the English period to the foundation of the heptarchy, and, therefore, belonging in part to the domain of ancient history. Though it has been subjected to criticism at least as severe as that poured by Whitaker and others upon Gibbon's great work, the *History* survives as a notable product of learning, albeit containing too large an imaginative element. Whitaker carried on the same line of research and conjecture in his *Genuine History of the Britons* (1772), intended as a refutation of Macpherson's treatise on the subject. In 1794 he published *The Course of Hannibal over the Alps ascertained*, which has not proved the last word on the subject.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. III, p. 551.

<sup>2</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, July 1808.

<sup>3</sup> Mitford, who has the courage of his opinions, states (vol. I, p. 278) that 'the House of Commons properly represents the Aristocratical part of the constitution.'

## CHAPTER XIV

### PHILOSOPHERS

#### HUME AND ADAM SMITH

OF the two friends whose names give a title to this chapter, it has been truthfully said that 'there was no third person writing the English language during the same period, who has had so much influence upon the opinions of mankind as either of these two men<sup>1</sup>.' There were many other writers on the same or cognate subjects, who made important contributions to the literature of thought; but Hume and Adam Smith tower above them all both in intellectual greatness and in the permanent influence of their work.

#### I. DAVID HUME

In the sketch of his *Own Life*, which he wrote a few months before his death, Hume says that he was 'seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments.' Another document of much earlier date (1734), which Hume himself revealed to no one, but which has been discovered and printed by his biographer<sup>2</sup>, gives us a clear insight into the nature of this literary ambition and of the obstacles to its satisfaction.

As our college education in Scotland, extending little further than the languages, ends commonly when we are about fourteen or fifteen years of age, I was after that left to my own choice in my reading, and found it incline me almost equally to books of reasoning and philosophy, and to poetry and the polite authors. Every one who is acquainted either with the philosophers or critics, knows that there is nothing yet established in either of these two sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes, even in the most fundamental articles. Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness of temper growing in me, which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects, but led me to seek out some new medium by which truth might be established. After much study and reflection on this, at last, when I was about eighteen years of age, there seemed to be opened up to me a new scene of thought, which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with an ardour natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply entirely to it. . . . Having now time and leisure to cool my inflamed imagination, I began to consider seriously

<sup>1</sup> Burton, J. H., *Life and Correspondence of David Hume*, vol. 1, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 1, pp. 30—33.

how I should proceed in my philosophical inquiries. I found that... every one consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and of happiness, without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This, therefore, I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth in criticism as well as morality.

These passages show, not only that Hume's ambition was entirely literary, but, also, that his literary ambition was centred in philosophy and that he was convinced he held in his grasp a key to its problems. Literary ambition never ceased to be Hume's ruling passion, and it brought him fame and even affluence. But his early enthusiasm for the discovery of truth seems to have been damped by the reception of his first and greatest work, or by the intellectual contradiction to which his arguments led, or by both causes combined. In philosophy, he never made any real advance upon his first work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*; his later efforts were devoted to presenting its arguments in a more perfect and more popular literary form, or to toning down their destructive results, and to the application of his ideas to questions of economics, politics and religion, as well as to winning a new reputation for himself in historical composition.

His career contained few incidents that need to be recorded beyond the publication of his books. He was born at Edinburgh on 26 April 1711, the younger son of a country gentleman of good family, but small property. His 'passion for literature' led to his early desertion of the study of law; when he was twenty-three, he tried commerce as a cure for the state of morbid depression in which severe study had landed him, and also, no doubt, as a means of livelihood. But, after a few months in a merchant's office at Bristol, he resolved to make frugality supply his deficiency of fortune, and settled in France, chiefly at La Flèche, where, more than a century before, Descartes had been educated at the Jesuit college. But he never mentions this connection with Descartes; he was occupied with other thoughts; and, after three years, in 1737, he came home to arrange for the publication of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, the first two volumes of which appeared in January 1739. If the book did not literally, as Hume put it, fall 'dead-born from the press,' it excited little attention; the only literary notice it received entirely failed to appreciate its significance. He was bitterly disappointed, but continued the preparation for the press of his third volume, 'Of Morals.' This appeared in 1740; and, in 1741, he published a volume of *Essays Moral and Political*, which reached a second edition and was supplemented by a second volume in 1742. The success of these essays gratified

Hume's literary ambition and, perhaps, had a good deal to do with the direction of his activity towards the application and popularisation of his reflections rather than to further criticism of their basis. About this time, Hume resided, for the most part, at the paternal estate (now belonging to his brother) of Ninewells in Berwickshire; but he was making efforts to secure an independent income: he failed twice to obtain a university professorship; he spent a troublesome year as tutor to a lunatic nobleman; he accompanied general St Clair as his secretary on his expedition to France in 1746, and on a mission to Vienna and Turin in 1748. In the latter year was published a third volume of *Essays Moral and Political*, and, also, *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*, afterwards (1758) entitled *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, in which the reasonings of book I of *A Treatise of Human Nature* were presented in a revised but incomplete form. A second edition of this work appeared in 1751, and, in the same year, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (founded upon book III of the *Treatise*) which, in the opinion of the author, was of all his 'writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best.' A few months later (February 1752), he published a volume of *Political Discourses* which, he said, was 'the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication.' According to Burton, it 'introduced Hume to the literature of the continent.' It was translated into French in 1753 and, again, in 1754. In 1752, he was appointed keeper of the advocates' library—a post which made a small addition to his modest income and enabled him to carry out his historical work. In 1753—4 appeared *Essays and Treatises on several subjects*; these included his various writings other than the *Treatise* and the *History*, and, after many changes, attained their final form in the edition of 1777. The new material added to them in later editions consisted chiefly of *Four Dissertations* published in 1757. The subjects of these dissertations were the natural history of religion, the passions (founded on book II of the *Treatise*), tragedy and taste. Essays on suicide and on immortality had been originally designed for this volume, but were hurriedly withdrawn on the eve of publication.

For more than two years, 1763 to 1765, Hume acted as secretary to the English embassy at Paris, where he was received with extraordinary enthusiasm by the court and by literary society. 'Here,' he wrote, 'I feed on ambrosia, drink nothing but nectar, breathe incense only, and walk on flowers.' He returned to London in January 1766, accompanied by Rousseau, whom he had befriended

and who, a few months later, repaid his kindness by provoking one of the most famous of quarrels between men of letters. Before the close of the year, he was again in Scotland, but, in the following year, was recalled to London as under-secretary of state, and it was not till 1769 that he finally settled in Edinburgh. There, he rejoined a society less brilliant and original than that he had left in Paris, but possessed of a distinction of its own. Prominent among his friends were Robertson, Hugh Blair and others of the clergy—men of high character and literary reputation, and representative of a religious attitude, known in Scotland as ‘moderatism’,<sup>1</sup> which did not disturb the serenity of Hume. He died on 25 August 1776.

After his death, his *Own Life* was published by Adam Smith (1777), and his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* by his nephew David (1779). We hear of these *Dialogues* more than twenty years earlier; but he was dissuaded from publishing them at the time, though he was concerned that they should not be lost and subjected the manuscript to repeated and careful revision. His philosophical activity may be said to have come to an end in 1757 with the publication of *Four Dissertations*, when he was forty-six years old. In spite of many criticisms, he refused to be drawn into controversy; but, in an ‘advertisement’ to the final edition of *Essays and Treatises*, he protested, with some irritation, against criticisms of *A Treatise of Human Nature*—‘the juvenile work which the Author never acknowledged.’

This disclaimer of his earliest and greatest work is interesting as a revelation of Hume’s character, but cannot affect philosophical values. If he had written nothing else, and this book alone had been read, the influence of his ideas on general literature would have been less marked; but his claim to rank as the greatest of English philosophers would not be seriously affected: it would be recognised that he had carried out a line of thought to its final issue, and the effect upon subsequent speculation would have been, in essentials, what it has been.

Hume is quite clear as to the method of his enquiry. He recognised that ‘Locke and others had anticipated him in the ‘attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects.’ Locke had, also, opened the way for deriving a system of philosophy from the science of the human mind; but Hume far excelled him in the thoroughness and consistency with

<sup>1</sup> For a definition of ‘moderatism’ by an observer of its decline, see Lord Cockburn’s *Journal*, vol. II, pp. 289—291.

which he followed this way. Locke's express purpose was to examine the understanding, that he might discover 'the utmost extent of its tether.' He does not doubt that knowledge can signify a reality outside the mind; but he wishes to determine the range of this cognitive power. From the outset, Hume conceives the problem in a wider manner. All knowledge is a fact or process of human nature; if we are able, therefore, 'to explain the principles of human nature,' we shall 'in effect propose a complete system of the sciences.' Without doubt, this utterance points back to his early discovery of a 'new medium by which truth might be established'—a discovery which, at the age of eighteen, had transported him beyond measure. In saying that 'a complete system of the sciences' would result from 'the principles of human nature,' Hume did not mean that the law of gravitation or the circulation of the blood could be discovered from an examination of the understanding and the emotions. His meaning was that, when the sciences are brought into system, certain general features are found to characterise them; and the explanation of these general features is to be sought in human nature—in other words, in our way of knowing and feeling. His statement, accordingly, comes simply to this, that mental science, or what we now call psychology, takes the place of philosophy—is itself philosophy.

Hume is commonly, and correctly, regarded as having worked out to the end the line of thought started by Locke. But, in the width of his purpose, the thoroughness of its elaboration and his clear consciousness of his task, he may be compared with Hobbes—a writer who had little direct effect upon his thought. For Hume is Hobbes inverted. The latter interprets the inner world—the world of life and thought—by means of the external or material world, whose impact gives rise to the motions which we call perception and volition. Hume, on the other hand, will assume nothing about external reality, but interprets it by means of the impressions or ideas of which we are all immediately conscious. And, as Hobbes saw all things under the rule of mechanical law, so Hume, also, has a universal principle of connection.

'Here,' he says, that is to say, among ideas, 'is a kind of *Attraction*, which in the mental world will be found to have as extraordinary effects as in the natural, and to shew itself in as many and as various forms.

The law of gravitation finds its parallel in the law of the association of ideas; as the movements of masses are explained by the former, so the latter is used to account for the grouping of mental contents.

In enumerating these contents, he modifies the doctrine of Locke. According to Locke, the material of knowledge comes from two different sources—sensation and reflection. The view hardly admitted of statement without postulating both a mental and a material world existing over against one another. Hume tries to avoid any such postulate. His primary data are all of one kind; he calls them 'impressions,' and says that they arise 'from unknown causes.' Ideas are distinguished from impressions by their lesser degree of 'force and liveliness.' Hume makes the generalisation that 'every simple idea has a simple impression which resembles it'; an idea is thus the 'faint image' of an impression; and there are degrees of this faintness: the 'more lively and strong' are ideas of memory, the weaker are ideas of imagination. Further, certain ideas, in some unexplained way, reappear with the force and liveliness of impressions, or, as Hume puts it, 'produce the new impressions' which he calls 'impressions of reflection' and which he enumerates as passions, desires and emotions. Reflection is, thus, derived from sensation, although its impressions in their turn give rise to new ideas. All mental contents (in Hume's language, all 'perceptions') are derived from sense impressions, and these arise from unknown causes. Simple ideas are distinguished from simple impressions merely by their comparative lack of force and liveliness; but these fainter data tend to group themselves in an order quite different from that of their corresponding impressions. By this 'association of ideas' are formed the complex ideas of relations, modes and substances.

Such are the elements of Hume's account of human nature; out of these elements, he has to explain knowledge and morality; and this explanation is, at the same time, to be 'a complete system of the sciences.' He is fully alive to the problem. In knowledge, ideas are connected together by other relations than the 'association' which rules imagination; and he proceeds at once to an enquiry into 'all those qualities which make objects admit of comparison.' These, he calls 'philosophical relations,' and he arranges them under seven general heads: resemblance, identity, space and time, quantity, degree of quality, contrariety, cause and effect.

All scientific propositions are regarded as expressing one or other of these relations. Hume regards the classification as exhaustive; and, at least, it is sufficient to form a comprehensive test of his theory. Since we have nothing to go upon but ideas and the impressions from which ideas originate, how are we to

explain knowledge of these relations? Hume's enquiry did not answer this question even to his own satisfaction; but it set a problem which has had to be faced by every subsequent thinker, and it has led many to adopt the sceptical conclusion to which the author himself was inclined.

The 'philosophical relations,' under his analysis, fall into two classes. On the one hand, some of them depend entirely on the ideas compared: these are resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality and proportions in quantity or number. On the other hand, the relations of identity, space and time, and causation may be changed without any change in the ideas related; our knowledge of them thus presents an obvious difficulty, for it cannot be derived from the ideas themselves. Hume does not take much trouble with the former class of relations, in which this difficulty does not arise. He is content to follow on Locke's lines and to think that general propositions of demonstrative certainty are, obviously, possible here, seeing that we are merely stating a relationship clearly apparent in the ideas themselves. He does not ask whether the relation is or is not a new idea, and, if it is, how it can be explained—from what impression it took its rise. And he gives no explanation of the fixed and permanent character attributed to an idea when it is made the subject of a universal proposition. It is important to note, however, that he does not follow Locke in holding that mathematics is a science which is at once demonstrative and 'instructive.' The propositions of geometry concern spatial relations, and our idea of space is received 'from the disposition of visible and tangible objects'; we have 'no idea of space or extension but when we regard it as an object either of our sight or feeling' (i.e. touch); and, in these perceptions, we can never attain exactness: 'our appeal is still to the weak and fallible judgment which we make from the appearance of the objects, and correct by a compass or common measure.' Geometry, therefore, is an empirical science; it is founded on observations of approximate accuracy only, though the variations from the normal in our observations may be neutralised in the general propositions which we form. Hume does not apply the same doctrine to arithmetic, on the ground (which his principles do not justify) that the unit is something unique. He is thus able to count quantity and number in his first class of relations and to except algebra and arithmetic from the effect of his subtle analysis of the foundations of geometry. In his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, however, he deserts, without a word of justification, the earlier

view which he had worked out with much care and ingenuity, and treats mathematics generally as the great example of demonstrative reasoning. In this later work, in which completeness is sacrificed to the presentation of salient features, he speaks, not of two kinds of relations, but of 'relations of ideas' and 'matters of fact'; and, in each, he seeks to save something from the general ruin of the sciences to which his premises lead. The last paragraph of the book sets forth his conclusion:

When we run over our libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.

This passage, startling and ruthless as it sounds, is chiefly remarkable for its reservations. It was easy to condemn 'divinity or school metaphysics' as illusory; they had for long been common game. But to challenge the validity of mathematics or of natural science was quite another matter. Hume did not temper the wind to the shorn lamb; but he took care that it should not visit too roughly the sturdy wethers of the flock. Yet we have seen that, according to his principles, mathematics rest upon observations which fall short of accuracy, while natural science, with its 'experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact,' depends upon the relation of cause and effect.

The examination of this relation occupies a central position in both his works; and its influence upon subsequent thought has been so great as, sometimes, to obscure the importance of other factors in his philosophy. He faced a problem into which Locke had hardly penetrated, and of which even Berkeley had had only a partial view. What do we mean when we say that one thing is cause and another thing its effect, and what right have we to that meaning? In sense perception, we have impressions of flame and of heat, for instance; but why do we say that the flame causes the heat, what ground is there for asserting any 'necessary connection' between them? The connection cannot be derived from any comparison of the ideas of flame and of heat; it must come from impression, therefore; but there is no separate impression of 'cause' or 'causation' which could serve as the link between two objects. What, then, is the origin of the connection? To use the terminology of the *Enquiry*, since cause is not a 'relation of ideas,' it must be a 'matter of fact'—an impression. But it is not itself a separate or simple impression; it must, therefore, be due to the

mode or manner in which impressions occur. In our experience, we are accustomed to find flame and heat combined; we pass constantly from one to the other; and the custom becomes so strong that, whenever the impression of flame occurs, the idea of heat follows. Then, we mistake this mental or subjective connection for an objective connection. Necessary connection is not in the objects, but only in the mind; yet custom is too strong for us, and we attribute it to the objects.

This is a simple statement of the central argument of Hume's most famous discussion. The 'powers' which Locke attributed to bodies must be denied—as Berkeley denied them. The consciousness of spiritual activity on which Berkeley relied is equally illusory on Hume's principles.

'If we reason *a priori*,' says Hume, 'anything may appear able to produce anything. The falling of a pebble may, for aught we know, extinguish the sun, or the wish of a man control the planets in their orbits.'

This striking utterance is, strictly, little better than a truism. No philosopher ever supposed that such knowledge about definite objects could be got in any other way than by experience. But Hume's negative criticism goes much deeper than this. We have no right to say that the extinction of the sun needs any cause at all, or that causation is a principle that holds of objects; all events are loose and separate. The only connection which we have a right to assert is that of an idea with an impression or with other ideas—the subjective routine which is called 'association of ideas.' Hume's constructive theory of causation is an explanation of how we come to suppose that there is causal connection in the world, although there is really nothing more than customary association in our minds.

If we admit Hume's fundamental assumption about impressions and ideas, it is impossible to deny the general validity of this reasoning. Any assertion of a causal connection—the whole structure of natural science, therefore—is simply a misinterpretation of certain mental processes. At the outset, Hume himself had spoken of impressions as arising from 'unknown causes'; and some expressions of the sort were necessary to give his theory a start and to carry the reader along with him; but they are really empty words. Experience is confined to impressions and ideas; causation is an attitude towards them produced by custom—by the mode of sequence of ideas; its applicability is only within the range of impressions or ideas; to talk of an impression as caused by something that is neither impression nor idea may have a very

real meaning to any philosopher except Hume; but to Hume it cannot have any meaning at all.

The discussion of causation brings out another and still more general doctrine held by Hume—his theory of belief. When I say that flame causes heat, I do not refer to a connection of ideas in my own mind; I am expressing belief in an objective connection independent of my mental processes. But Hume's theory of causation reduces the connection to a subjective routing. Now, some other impression than 'flame' might precede the idea of heat—the impression 'cold,' for instance. How is it, then, that I do not assert 'cold causes heat'? The sequence 'cold—heat' may be equally real in my mind with the sequence 'flame—heat.' How is it that the former does not give rise to belief in the way that the latter does? Hume would say that the only difference is that the association in the former case is less direct and constant than in the latter, and thus leads to an idea of less force and liveliness. Belief, accordingly, is simply a lively idea associated with a present impression. It belongs to the sensitive, not to the rational, part of our nature. And yet it marks the fundamental distinction between judgment and imagination.

In the *Treatise*, at any rate, there is no faltering of purpose or weakening of power when the author proceeds to apply his principles to the fabric of knowledge. It is impossible, in this place, to follow his subtle and comprehensive argument; but its issue is plain. With objections not unlike Berkeley's, he dismisses the independent existence of bodies, and then he turns a similar train of reasoning against the reality of the self:

When I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I can never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed, for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may truly be said not to exist.

According to Hume's own illustration, the mind is but the stage on which perceptions pass and mingle and glide away. Or, rather, there is no stage at all, but only a phantasmagory of impressions and ideas.

Hume's purpose was constructive; but the issue, as he faces it, is sceptical. And he is a genuine sceptic; for, even as to his scepticism, he is not dogmatic. Why should he assent to his own reasoning? he asks; and he answers, 'I can give no reason why I should assent to it, and feel nothing but a *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view.' The propensity, however,

'is strong only when the 'bent of mind' is in a certain direction; a dinner, a game of backgammon, makes such speculations appear ridiculous; and 'nature' suffices to 'obliterate all these chimeras.' A year later, Hume referred again to this sceptical *impasse*, in an appendix to the third volume of his *Treatise*; and there, with remarkable insight, he diagnosed the causes of his own failure. The passage deserves quotation, seeing that it has been often overlooked, and is, nevertheless, one of the most significant utterances in the history of philosophy.

In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz. *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences.* Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty in the case. For my part, I must plead the privilege of a sceptic, and confess that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding. I pretend not, however, to pronounce it absolutely insuperable. Others, perhaps, or myself, upon more mature reflexions, may discover some hypothesis that will reconcile those contradictions.

Hume seems himself to have made no further attempt to solve the problem. His followers have been content to build their systems on his foundation, with minor improvements of their own, but without overcoming or facing the fundamental difficulty which he saw and expressed.

The logical result of his analysis is far from leading to that 'complete system of the sciences' which he had anticipated from his 'new medium'; it leads, not to reconstruction, but to a sceptical disintegration of knowledge; and he was clearsighted enough to see this result. Thenceforward, scepticism became the characteristic attitude of his mind and of his writings. But his later works exhibit a less thorough scepticism than that to which his thinking led. Even his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* shows a weakening of the sceptical attitude, in the direction of a 'mitigated scepticism' which resembles modern positivism and admits knowledge of phenomena and of mathematical relations.

When he came to deal with concrete problems, his principles were often applied in an emasculated form. But the 'new medium' is not altogether discarded: appeal is constantly made to the mental factor—impression and idea. This is characteristic of Hume's doctrine of morality. 'Here is a matter of fact; but 'tis the object of feeling not of reason. It lies in yourself not in the object.' And from this results his famous definition of virtue: 'every quality of the mind is denominated virtuous which gives pleasure by the mere survey; as every quality which produces

pain is called vicious.' The 'sentiments of approbation or blame' which thus arise depend, in all cases, on sympathy; sympathy with the pleasures and pains of others is, thus, postulated by Hume as an ultimate fact; the reasonings of Butler and Hutcheson prevented him from seeking to account for it as a refined form of selfishness, as Hobbes had done; and yet, upon his own premises, it remains inexplicable. In his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, his differences from Hobbes, and even from Locke, are still more clearly shown than in the *Treatise*; he defends the reality of disinterested benevolence; and the sentiment of moral approbation is described as 'humanity,' or 'a feeling for the happiness of mankind,' which, it is said, 'nature has made universal in the species.' This sentiment, again, is always directed towards qualities which tend to the pleasure, immediate or remote, of the person observed or of others. Thus, Hume occupies a place in the utilitarian succession; but he did not formulate a quantitative utilitarianism, as Hutcheson had already done. He drew an important distinction, however, between natural virtues, such as benevolence, which are immediately approved and which have a direct tendency to produce pleasure, and artificial virtues, of which justice is the type, where both the approval and the tendency to pleasure are mediated by the social system which the virtue in question supports.

Hume exerted a profound influence upon theology, not only by the general trend of his speculation but, also, through certain specific writings. Of these writings, the most important are the essay 'Of Miracles' contained in *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, the dissertation entitled 'The Natural History of Religion,' and *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. The first-named is the most famous; it produced a crowd of answers, and it had a good deal to do with public attention being attracted to the author's works. It consists of an expansion of a simple and ingenious argument, which had occurred to him when writing his *Treatise of Human Nature*, but which, strangely enough, is inconsistent with the principles of that work. It regards 'laws of nature' as established by a uniform experience, 'miracles' as violations of these laws and the evidence for these miracles as necessarily inferior to the 'testimony of the senses' which establishes the laws of nature. Whatever validity these positions may have on another philosophical theory, the meaning both of laws of nature and of miracles as conflicting with these laws evaporates under the analysis by which, as in Hume's *Treatise*, all events are

seen as 'loose and separate.' 'The Natural History of Religion' contains reflections of greater significance. Here, Hume distinguishes between the theoretical argument which leads to theism and the actual mental processes from which religion has arisen. Its 'foundation in reason' is not the same thing as its 'origin in human nature'; and he made an important step in advance by isolating this latter question and treating it apart. He held that religion arose 'from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears which actuate the human mind,' and, in particular, from the 'melancholy' rather than from the 'agreeable' passions; and he maintained the thesis that polytheism preceded theism in the historical development of belief.

'The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery.' Such is the concluding reflection of this work. But a further and serious attempt to solve the riddle is made in *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. This small book contains the author's mature views on ultimate questions. It is written in his most perfect style, and shows his mastery of the dialogue form. There is none of the usual scenery of the dramatic dialogue; but the persons are distinct, the reasoning is lucid, and the interest is sustained to the end. The traditional arguments are examined with an insight and directness which were only equalled afterwards by Kant; but, unlike Kant, and with insight more direct if not more profound, Hume finds the most serious difficulties of the question in the realm of morals. The form of the work makes it not altogether easy to interpret; and some commentators have held that Hume's own views should not be identified with those of the more extreme critic of theism. Hume himself says as much at the close of the work; but his habitual irony in referring to religious topics is part of the difficulty of interpretation. All the speakers in the *Dialogues* are represented as accepting some kind of theistic belief; and it is not necessary to attribute expressions of this kind simply to irony. The trend of the argument is towards a shadowy form of theism—'that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence'; and, in a remarkable footnote, the author seems to be justifying his own right to take up such a position:

No philosophical Dogmatist denies, that there are difficulties both with regard to the senses and to all science; and that these difficulties are in a regular, logical method, absolutely insolvable. No Sceptic denies, that we lie under an absolute necessity, notwithstanding these difficulties, of thinking, and believing, and reasoning with regard to all kind of subjects, and even of frequently assenting with confidence and security.

In other words, his logic leads to complete scepticism; but, just because the 'difficulties' are insoluble, he claims a right to disregard them, and to act and think like other men, when action and thought are called for.

For this reason, his theory of knowledge has little effect upon his political and economical essays, although they are closely connected with his ethical and psychological views. The separate essays were published, in various volumes, between 1741 and 1777; and, in the interval, political philosophy was profoundly influenced by the works of Montesquieu and Rousseau. The essays do not make a system, and economics is in them not definitely distinguished from politics; but both system and the distinction are suggested in the remarks on the value of general principles and general reasonings which he prefixed to the essays on commerce, money and other economical subjects. 'When we reason upon *general* subjects,' he says, 'our speculations can scarcely ever be too fine, provided they be just.'

In both groups of essays, Hume was not merely a keen critic of prevailing theories and conceptions; his knowledge of human nature and of history guided his analysis of a situation. A growing clearness of doctrine, also, may be detected by comparing his earlier with his later utterances. In later editions, he modified his acceptance of the traditional doctrines of the natural equality of men, and of consent as the origin of society. The essay 'Of the Origin of Government,' first published in 1777, makes no mention either of divine right or of original contract. Society is traced to its origin in the family; and political society is said to have been established 'in order to administer justice'—though its actual beginnings are sought in the concert and order forced upon men by war. Again, whereas, in an earlier essay, he had said that 'a constitution is only so far good as it provides a remedy against maladministration,' he came, later, to look upon its tendency to liberty as marking the perfection of civil society—although there must always be a struggle between liberty and the authority without which government could not be conducted. His political thinking, accordingly, tends to limit the range of legitimate governmental activity; similarly, in economics, he criticises the doctrine of the mercantilists, and on various points anticipates the views of the analytical economists of a later generation. Perhaps, however, nothing in these essays shows better his insight into the principles of economics than the letter which, shortly before his death, he wrote to Adam Smith upon receipt of a copy of *The*

• *Wealth of Nations*. In this letter, after a warm expression of praise for, and satisfaction with, his friend's achievement, he makes a single criticism—'I cannot think that the rent of farms makes any part of the price of the produce, but that the price is determined altogether by the quantity and the demand'—which suggests that he himself had arrived at the theory of rent commonly associated with the name of Ricardo.

## II. ADAM SMITH

Adam Smith was born at Kirkcaldy on 5 June 1723. He was educated at the university of Glasgow, where he had Hutcheson as one of his teachers, and, in 1740, he proceeded to Oxford, where he resided continuously through term and vacation for more than six years. Like Hobbes in the previous century, and Gibbon and Bentham shortly after his own day, he has nothing that is good to say of the studies of the university. His own college of Balliol gave small promise of its future fame: it was, then, chiefly distinguished as a centre of Jacobitism, and its authorities confiscated his copy of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*; but its excellent library enabled him to devote himself to assiduous study, mainly in Greek and Latin literature. After some years spent at home, he returned to Glasgow as professor of logic (1751) and, afterwards, (1752) of moral philosophy. In 1759, he published his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which brought him immediate fame. Early in 1764, he resigned his professorship in order to accompany the young duke of Buccleuch on a visit to France which lasted over two years. This marks the beginning of the second and more famous period of his literary career. He found Toulouse (where they first settled) much less gay than Glasgow, and, therefore, started writing a book 'in order to pass away the time<sup>1</sup>'. This is probably the first reference to the great work of his riper years. But it does not mark the beginning of his interest in economics. By tradition and by his own preference, a comprehensive treatment of social philosophy was included in the work of the moral philosophy chair at Glasgow; and there is evidence to show that some of his most characteristic views had been written down even before he settled there<sup>2</sup>. When, in 1765—6, Smith resided for many months in Paris with his pupil, he was received into the remarkable society of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rae, J., *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Stewart, Dugald, *Life and Writings of Adam Smith in Works*, vol. x, pp. 67, 68.

'economists' (commonly known as the 'physiocrats'). Quesnay, the leader of the school, had published his *Maximes générales de gouvernement économique* and his *Tableau économique* in 1758; and Turgot, who was soon to make an effort to introduce their common principles into the national finance, was, at this time, writing his *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses*, although it was not published till some years later. Smith held the work of the physiocrats, and of Quesnay in particular, in high esteem; only death robbed Quesnay of the honour of having *The Wealth of Nations* dedicated to him. The exact extent of Smith's indebtedness to the school is matter of controversy. But, two things seem clear, though they have been sometimes overlooked. He shared their objection to mercantilism and their approval of commercial freedom on grounds at which he had arrived before their works were published; and he did not accept their special theory that agriculture is the sole source of wealth, or the practical consequence which they drew from the principle that the revenue of the state should be derived from 'a single tax' on land. After his return from France, Smith settled down quietly with his mother and cousin at Kirkcaldy and devoted himself to the composition of *The Wealth of Nations*, which was published in 1776. In 1778, he removed to Edinburgh as commissioner of customs; he died on 17 July 1790.

Apart from some minor writings, Adam Smith was the author of two works of unequal importance. These two works belong to different periods of his life—the professorial, in which he is looked upon as leading the ordinary secluded life of a scholar, and the later period, in which he had gathered wider knowledge of men and affairs. And the two works differ in the general impression which they are apt to produce. According to the earlier, sympathy, or social feeling, is the foundation of morality; the ideal of the later work is that of 'a social system in which each person is left free to pursue his own interest in his own way, and the author throws gentle ridicule upon the 'affectation' of 'trading for the public benefit.' Undue stress has, however, been laid upon the difference; it is superficial rather than fundamental, and results from the diversity of subject and method in the two works rather than from an opposition between their underlying ideas. Indeed, it may be argued that the social factor in the individual, which is brought out in the ethical treatise, is a necessary condition of

<sup>1</sup> This term was invented by Dupont de Nemours (1769—1817), a younger member of the school.

• that view of a harmony between public and private interests which underlies the doctrine of 'natural liberty' taught in *The Wealth of Nations*.

*The Theory of Moral Sentiments* covers much ground already traversed by preceding British moralists. It is an elaborate analysis of the various forms and objects of the moral consciousness. It is written in a flowing and eloquent, if rather diffuse, style; it is full of apt illustration; and the whole treatise is dominated by a leading idea. Smith's central problem, like that of his predecessors, is to explain the fact of moral approval and disapproval. He discards the doctrine of a special 'moral sense,' impervious to analysis, which had been put forward by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. Like Hume, he regards sympathy as the fundamental fact of the moral consciousness; and he seeks to show, more exactly than Hume had done, how sympathy can become a test of morality. He sees that it is not, of itself, a sufficient test. A spectator may imaginatively enter into the emotional attitude of another man, and this is sympathy; but it is not a justification of the man's attitude. The spectator may have misunderstood the circumstances, or his own interests may have been involved. Accordingly, the only sympathy that has ethical value is that of an 'impartial and well-informed spectator.' But this impartial and well-informed spectator, whose sympathy with our passions and affections would be their adequate justification, is not an actual but an ideal person; and, indeed, Smith recognises as much when he says that we have to appeal from 'the opinions of mankind' to 'the tribunal of [our] own conscience'—to 'the man within the breast.' The great merit of the theory, as worked out by Smith, is its recognition of the importance of the social factor in morality, and of sympathy as the means by which this social factor operates. The individual man, in his view, is a being of social structure and tendencies. But the social side of his nature is not exaggerated: if man 'can subsist only in society,' it is equally true that 'every man is by nature first and principally recommended to his own care.' These points modify the contrast between the teaching of his first work and the 'individualism' of his economic theory. •

Adam Smith is frequently spoken of as the founder of political economy. By this is meant that he was the first to isolate economic facts, to treat them as a whole, and to treat them scientifically. But, nine years before the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, another work appeared which may be regarded as having anticipated it in this respect—Sir James Steuart's *Inquiry into the*

*Principles of Political Economy.* Steuart was a Jacobite laird, who, in 1763, returned from a long exile abroad. He had travelled extensively, and his work contains the result of observation of different states of society as well as of systematic reflection; but it is without merit in respect of literary form. It is presented to the public as 'an attempt towards reducing to principles, and forming into a regular science, the complicated interests of domestic policy.' It deals with 'population, agriculture, trade, industry, money, coin, interest, circulation, banks, exchange, public credit, and taxes'; and the author has a definite view of scientific method. He speaks, indeed, of 'the art of political economy,' using the term 'political economy' in much the same sense as that in which Smith used it in dealing with 'systems of political economy' in the fourth book of his great work. But this art is the statesman's business; and behind the statesman stands 'the speculative person, who, removed from the practice, extracts the principles of this science from *observation and reflection*.' Steuart does not pretend to a system, but only to 'a clear deduction of principles.' These principles, however, are themselves gathered from experience. His first chapter opens with the assertion, 'Man we find acting uniformly in all ages, in all countries, and in all climates, from the principles of self-interest, expediency, duty and passion.' And, of these, 'the ruling principle' which he follows is 'the principle of self-interest.' From this point, the author's method may be described as deductive, and as resembling that of Smith's successors more than it does Smith's own. Further, he recognises that the conclusions, like the principles from which they proceed, are abstract and may not fit all kinds of social conditions, so that 'the political economy in each [country] must necessarily be different.' How far Smith took account of Steuart's reasonings we cannot say; he does not mention his name: though he is reported to have said that he understood Steuart's system better from his talk than from his book.

Adam Smith does not begin with a discourse on method; he was an artist in exposition; and he feared, perhaps unduly, any appearance of pedantry. He plunges at once into his subject: 'The annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life which it annually consumes.' These first words suggest the prevailing theme. Wealth consists not in the precious metals, but in the goods which men use or consume; and its source or cause is labour. On this foundation, he builds the structure of his science;

and—although he says nothing about it—we can trace the method which he regarded as appropriate to his enquiry. It may be described shortly as abstract reasoning checked and reinforced by historical investigation. The main theorems of the analytical economics of a later period are to be found expressed or suggested in his work; but almost every deduction is supported by concrete instances. Rival schools have, thus, regarded him as their founder, and are witnesses to his grasp of principles and insight into facts. He could isolate a cause and follow out its effects; and, if he was apt sometimes to exaggerate its prominence in the complex of human motives and social conditions, it was because the facts at his disposal did not suggest the necessary qualifications of his doctrine, although more recent experience has shown that the qualifications are needed.

Adam Smith isolates the fact of wealth and makes it the subject of a science. But he sees this fact in its connections with life as a whole. His reasonings are grounded in a view of human nature and its environment, both of which meet in labour, the source of wealth and also, as he thinks, the ultimate standard of the value of commodities. In the division of labour, he sees the first step taken by man in industrial progress. His treatment of this subject has become classical, and is too well known for quotation; it is more to the purpose to point out that it was an unerring instinct for essentials which led him, in his first chapter, to fix attention on a point so obvious that it might easily have been overlooked and yet of far-reaching importance in social development generally. The division of labour, according to Smith, is the result of 'the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another.' But his analysis of motives goes deeper than this; and, so far as they are concerned with wealth, human motives seem to be reduced by him to two: 'the passion for present enjoyment' which 'prompts to expense,' and 'the desire of bettering our condition' which 'prompts to save.' Both are selfish; and it is on this motive of self-interest, or a view of one's own advantage, that Smith constantly relies. He constructs an economic commonwealth which consists of a multitude of persons, each seeking his own interest and, in so doing, unwittingly furthering the public good—thus promoting 'an end which was no part of his intention.'

'The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition,' he says, 'when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle, that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of

carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations.'

Smith, like many other philosophers of the time, assumed that there was a natural identity of public and private interest. It is a comfortable belief that society would be served best if everybody looked after his own interests; and, in an economist, this belief was, perhaps, an inevitable reaction from a condition in which state regulation of industry had largely consisted in distributing monopolies and other privileges. In Smith's mind, the belief was also bound up with the view that this identity of interests resulted from the guidance of 'the invisible hand' that directs the fate of mankind. But the belief itself was incapable of verification, and subsequent industrial history refutes it. Indeed, in various places in his work, Smith himself declines to be bound by it. He thinks that the interests of the landowners and of the working class are in close agreement with the interest of society, but that those of 'merchants and master manufacturers' have not the same connection with the public interest. 'The interest of the dealers,' he says, 'is always in some respects different from, and even opposite to, that of the public.' The harmony of interests, therefore, is incomplete. Nor would it be fair to say that Smith had relinquished, in *The Wealth of Nations*, his earlier view of the social factor in human motive. What he did hold was, rather, that, in the pursuit of wealth, that is to say, in industry and commerce, the motive of self-interest predominates; in famous passages, he speaks as if no other motive need be taken into account; but he recognises its varying strength; and it is only in the class of 'merchants and master manufacturers' that he regards it as having free course: they are acute in the perception of their own interest and unresting in its pursuit; in the country gentleman, on the other hand, selfish interest is tempered by generosity and weakened by indolence.

From the nature of man and the environment in which he is placed, Smith derives his doctrine of 'the natural progress of opulence.' Subsistence is 'prior to conveniency and luxury'; agriculture provides the former, commerce the latter; the cultivation of the country, therefore, precedes the increase of the town; the town, indeed, has to subsist on the surplus produce of the country; foreign commerce comes later still. This is the natural order, and it is promoted by man's natural inclinations. But human institutions have thwarted these natural inclinations,

and, 'in many respects, entirely inverted' the natural order. Up to Adam Smith's time, the regulation of industry had been almost universally admitted to be part of the government's functions; criticism of the principles and methods of this regulation had not been wanting; the theory of 'the balance of trade,' for instance, important in the doctrine of the mercantilists, had been examined and rejected by Hume and by others before him. But Smith made a comprehensive survey of the means by which, in agriculture, in the home trade and in foreign commerce, the state had attempted to regulate industry; these attempts, he thought, were all diversions of the course of trade from its 'natural channels'; and he maintained that they were uniformly pernicious. Whether it acts by preference or by restraint, every such system 'retards, instead of accelerating, the progress of the society towards real wealth and greatness; and diminishes, instead of increasing, the real value of the annual produce of its land and labour.' When all such systems are swept away, 'the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord.'

The ideas and arguments of Adam Smith were influential, at a later date, in establishing the system of free trade in Great Britain; and, perhaps, it would be not far wrong to say that a generation of economists held his views on this question to be his most solid title to fame. He regarded liberty as natural in contrast with the artificiality of government control; and the term 'natural' plays an ambiguous part in his general reasonings, changing its shade of meaning, but always implying a note of approval. In this, he only used the language of his time—though Hume had pointed out that the word was treacherous. But it has to be borne in mind that, while he extolled this 'natural liberty' as the best thing for trade, he did not say that it was in all cases the best thing for a country. He saw that there were other things than wealth which were worth having, and that of some of these the state was the guardian. Security must take precedence of opulence, and, on this ground, he would restrict natural liberty, not only to defend the national safety, but, also, for the protection of individual traders.

### III. OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL WRITERS

As we look back upon the development of philosophical problems, it might seem that, for a philosophical writer after Hume, there was but one thing worth doing—to answer him, if possible; and, if that were not possible, to keep silent. But the

issue was not quite so clear to his contemporaries. Indeed, his own example did not press it home. It showed, on the contrary, that work of importance might be done in certain departments even when the contradiction was ignored to which Hume had reduced the theory of knowledge. Soon after the publication of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, valuable writings appeared on psychology, and on moral and political theory; there were also critics of Hume in considerable number; and one of that number had both the insight to trace Hume's scepticism to its logical origin and the intellectual capacity to set forth a theory of knowledge in which the same difficulty should not arise.

Among the psychologists, the most important place belongs to David Hartley, a physician, and sometime fellow of Jesus college, Cambridge, whose *Observations on Man: his frame, his duty, and his expectations* appeared in 1749. The rapid march of philosophical thought in the previous forty years was ignored by, and probably unknown to, the author. The whole second part of his book in which he works out a theological theory may be regarded as antiquated. He does not mention Berkeley; he seems never to have heard of David Hume. But the first or psychological part of the book has two striking features: it is a systematic attempt at a physiological psychology, and it developed the theory of the association of ideas in a way which influenced, far more than Hume did, the views of the later associational school of James Mill and his successors. The physiological doctrine was suggested by certain passages in Newton's *Optics*. Hartley supposes that the contact of an external object with the sensory nerves excites 'vibrations in the æther residing in the pores of these nerves'; these vibrations enter the brain, are 'propagated freely every way over the whole medullary substance,' and sensations are the result; further, they leave vestiges or traces behind them, and this is the origin of ideas which depend on minute vibrations or 'vibratiuncles.' Motor activity is explained in a similar way. This physiological view is the basis of his whole doctrine of mind, and, more particularly, of the doctrine of association. In respect of the latter doctrine, Hartley wrote under the influence of Locke; but he has left it on record that the suggestion to make use of association as a general principle of psychological explanation came from John Gay, who had written *A Dissertation* prefixed to Law's English translation of archbishop King's *Origin of Evil* (1731), in which the doctrine was used to explain the connection of morality with

\* private happiness. Hartley offered a physiological explanation of association itself, gave a generalised statement of its laws and applied it to the details of mental life. He did not see, as Hume had seen, the special difficulty of applying it so as to explain judgment, assent, or belief.

Abraham Tucker was a psychologist of a different temper from Hartley. He was a constant critic of Hartley's physiological doctrines, and he excelled in that introspective analysis which has been practised by many English writers. Tucker was a country gentleman whose chief employment was a study of the things of the mind. The first fruit of his reflection was a fragment *Freewill, Foreknowledge and Fate* (1763), published under the pseudonym of Edward Search; certain criticisms of this piece produced, also in 1763, *Man in quest of Himself: or a Defence of the Individuality of the Human Mind*, 'by Cuthbert Comment.' Thereafter, he did not turn aside from his great work, *The Light of Nature pursued*, of which the first four volumes were published by himself (again under the name of Search) in 1765, and the last three appeared after his death (1774). The author was a man of leisure himself, and he wrote for men of leisure; he was not without method; but his plan grew as he proceeded; when new fields of enquiry opened, he did not refuse to wander in them; and he liked to set forth his views *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. Indeed, it is a work of inordinate length, and the whole is of unequal merit. Many of the long chapters have lost their interest through lapse of time and the changes which time has brought. Others, perhaps, may appeal to us only when we can catch the author's mood. Such are the speculations—put forward as purely hypothetical—concerning the soul's vehicle, the mundane soul and the vision of the disembodied soul. Mysticism is apt to appear fantastic when expressed in language so matter of fact; but the writer has a rare power of realising his fancies. The chapters, however, which deal more specifically with human nature are a genuine and important contribution to the literature of mind and morals. The writer was as innocent of Hume as was Hartley; he criticised Berkeley, though seldom with insight and never with sympathy; and he took Locke as his master. But he was not a slavish follower; it would be difficult to instance finer or more exhaustive criticism than his examination of the Lockean view that all action has for its motive the most pressing uneasiness. His moral doctrine is, perhaps, still more remarkable

for the candour and elaboration with which he discussed the problem which faced all followers of Locke—the consistency of an analysis of action in terms of personal pleasure and pain with a theory of morality in which benevolence is supreme. Herein, he provided most of the material afterwards made use of by Paley. Into the details of his teaching it is impossible to enter. But, perhaps, it is not too much to say that only his diffuseness has prevented him from becoming a classic. The mere mass of the book is deterrent. Yet he would be an unlucky reader who could spend half-an-hour over its pages without finding something to arrest his attention and even to enthrall his interest. The author sees mankind and the human lot with a shrewd but kindly eye; his stores of illustration are inexhaustible and illuminate subjects which in other hands would be dull; even the subtlest points are made clear by a style which is free and simple and varied; there is never any trace of sentimentality; but there are passages of humour and of pathos worthy of Goldsmith.

Richard Price, a native of Glamorgan, who became a unitarian minister in London, left his mark on more than one department of thought. His *Observations on Reversionary Payments* (1771) made a distinct advance in the theory of life assurance. His *Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the National Debt* (1771) is said to have contributed to the reestablishment of the sinking fund. He was drawn into the current of revolutionary politics and became a leading exponent of their ideas. His *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America* made him famous in two continents. The preface to the first edition was dated 8 February, that to the fifth edition 12 March, 1776. *Additional Observations* on the same subject appeared in 1777, and a *General Introduction and Supplement* to the two tracts in 1778. The revolution in France was the occasion for *A Discourse on the Love of our Country, delivered on Nov. 4, 1789*; and this he closed with a *Nunc dimittis*: 'After sharing in the benefits of one Revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other Revolutions, both glorious.' This *Discourse* had the further distinction of provoking Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. But, famous as his political partisanship made him at the time, Price has a better title to be remembered for his first work, *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals* (1757; 3rd edn, revised and enlarged, 1787).

Price has the mathematician's interest in intellectual concepts and his power of dealing with abstractions. In philosophy, he is a successor of Cudworth and Clarke, and the theories of knowledge of both Locke and Hume are attacked at the roots. The understanding or reason (he argues) has its own ideas, for which it does not depend upon sense-impression. Necessity, possibility, identity, cause are instances of such abstract ideas. They are 'intelligible objects' discovered by 'the eye of the mind.' Reason is thus 'the source of new ideas'; and among them are the ideas of right and wrong; these are simple ideas and perceived by an immediate 'intuition' of the understanding: 'morality is a branch of necessary truth.' The system which Price bases on this view has become, more than any other, the type of modern intuitional ethics.

Joseph Priestley had many points of sympathy with Price. They belonged to the same profession—the unitarian ministry—and they were prominent on the same side in the revolutionary politics of the day. But, in spite of this similarity and of their personal friendship, they represent different attitudes of mind. Price was a mathematician, familiar with abstract ideas, and an intellectualist in philosophy. Priestley was a chemist, busied in experiments, a convinced disciple of the empirical philosophy and a supporter of materialism. He was the author of *The History and present State of Electricity* (1767), and, afterwards, of numerous papers and treatises on chemical subjects, which recorded the results of his original investigations and have established his fame as a man of science. He came early under the influence of Hartley and published a simplification of his book—omitting the doctrine of vibrations and laying stress solely on the principle of the association of ideas; but he rejected Hartley's view of mind as an immaterial principle and held that the powers termed mental are the result 'of such an organical structure as that of the brain.' His philosophical views were expressed and defended in *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777), in *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity* (1777) and in *A Free Discussion* (1778) on these topics with Price; and he also published (1774) *An Examination* of the doctrines of Reid and others of the new school of Scottish philosophers. Of greater interest than these, however, is the short *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (1768). This forms a contrast to the *a priori* arguments in which Price delighted—although its practical tendency is the same. It propounds 'one general idea,' namely, 'that all people live in

society for their mutual advantage,' and draws the conclusion that their happiness is 'the great standard by which every thing relating to that state must finally be determined.' Priestley thus set the example, which Bentham followed, of taking utilitarian considerations for the basis of a philosophical radicalism, instead of the dogmas about natural rights common with other revolutionary thinkers of the period. He did not anticipate Bentham in using the famous utilitarian formula (as he is often said to have done<sup>1</sup>), but he did precede him in taking the happiness of the majority as the test in every political question, and he made it easier for Bentham to use the same standard in judging private conduct.

In a somewhat similar way, the exhaustive analyses of Tucker led to the theological utilitarianism of William Paley, sometime fellow of Christ's college, Cambridge, and senior wrangler in 1763. Paley was not a writer of marked originality. If, in his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785), he owed much to Tucker, in his *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794), he depended on the *Criterion* (1752) of John Douglas, bishop of Salisbury—a reply to Hume's argument against miracles—and on Nathaniel Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History* (1723—55); and, in his *Natural Theology* (1804), he drew much material from John Ray's *The Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation* (1691), from William Derham's *Physico-Theology* (1713) and from the work of the Dutchman Nieuwentyt, which had been translated into English in 1730 as *The Religious Philosopher*. His *Horæ Paulinæ* (1790) is said to be the most original, and to have been the least successful, of his publications. These four books form a consistent system. Probably, no English writer has ever excelled Paley in power of marshalling arguments or in clearness of reasoning; and these merits have given some of his works a longer life as academic text-books than their other merits can justify. Paley was, essentially, a man of his time and his views were its views, though expressed with a skill which was all his own.

In his *Moral Philosophy*, there is no trace of the vacillation at critical points which marks most of his empirical predecessors. The only criticism to which it lies open is that morality vanishes when reduced to a calculation of selfish interests. A man's own happiness is always his motive; he can seek the general happiness only when

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, vol. ix, p. 302 note.

that way of acting is made for his own happiness also; and this can be done only by the rewards and punishments of a lawgiver. Locke distinguished three different sorts of law, and Paley followed him rather closely. But the law of honour is insufficient, as having little regard to the general happiness; and the law of the land is inadequate for it omits many duties as not fit objects for compulsion, and it permits many crimes because incapable of definition; there remains, therefore, only the law of Scripture (that is, of God) which, alone, is obviously sufficient. Hence, the famous definition, 'Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.'

This conclusion leads up to the argument of his later works. His *Horæ Paulinæ* and *Evidences* have to demonstrate the credibility of the New Testament writings and the truth of the Christian revelation; and this position assumes the existence of God which, in his *Natural Theology*, he proves from the marks of design in the universe and, in particular, in the human body. In these works, we see how complete is the shifting of interest to which reference has been previously made<sup>1</sup>. Attention is concentrated on the question of external evidences, and the content of religion is almost entirely overlooked. God is the superhuman watchmaker who has put the world-machine together with surprising skill, and intervenes miraculously, on rare occasions, when the works are getting out of order. Paley developed a familiar analogy with unequalled impressiveness; he should not be blamed for failing to anticipate the effect upon his argument which has been produced by the biological theory of natural selection; but he did not pause to examine the underlying assumptions of the analogy which he worked out; he had no taste for metaphysics; and his mind moved easily only within the range of the scientific ideas of his own day.

The most powerful reply to Hume—indeed, the only competent attempt to refute his philosophy as a whole—came from a group of scholars in Aberdeen who had formed themselves into a philosophical society. Of this group, Thomas Reid, a professor in King's college, was the most notable member, and he was the founder of the school of Scottish philosophy known as the commonsense school. With him were associated George Campbell and James Beattie<sup>2</sup>, professors (the former afterwards principal) in Marischal college, as well as other men of mark in

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, vol. ix, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> As to Beattie's poetry cf. chap. vii, pp. 154 f., *ante*.

their day. The earliest contribution to the controversy—Campbell's *Dissertation on Miracles* (1763)—dealt with a side issue; but it is of interest for its examination of the place of testimony in knowledge; whereas experience (it is argued) leads to general truths and is the foundation of philosophy, testimony is the foundation of history, and it is capable of giving absolute certainty. Campbell's later work, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), contains much excellent psychology. Beattie's *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* (1770) is not a work of originality or of distinction; but it is a vigorous polemic; it brought him great temporary fame, and he has been immortalised by the art of Reynolds as serenely clasping his book whilst Hume and other apostles of error are being hurled into limbo. About the same time, James Oswald, a Perthshire clergyman, published *An Appeal to Common Sense in behalf of Religion* (1766—72). Reid, Beattie and Oswald were placed together by Priestley for the purpose of his *Examination*; and the same collocation of names was repeated by Kant; but it is entirely unjust to Reid.

Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* was published in 1764; shortly afterwards, he removed to Glasgow, to fill the chair vacated by Adam Smith. His later and more elaborate works—*Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* and *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*—appeared in 1785 and 1788 respectively. In his philosophical work, Reid has the great merit of going to the root of the matter, and he is perfectly fair-minded in his criticism. He admits the validity of Hume's reasonings; he does not appeal to the vulgar against his conclusions; but he follows the argument back to its premises and tests the truth of these premises. This is his chief claim to originality. He finds that the sceptical results of Hume are legitimate inferences from 'the ideal theory' which Locke took over from Descartes, and he puts to himself the question, 'what evidence have I for this doctrine, that all the objects of my knowledge are ideas in my own mind?' He points out (what is undoubtedly true) that neither Locke nor Berkeley nor Hume produced any evidence for the assumption. They started with the view that the immediate object of knowledge is something in the mind called ideas; and they were consequently unable to prove the existence of anything outside the mind or even of mind itself. 'Ideas,' says Reid, 'seem to have something in their nature

unfriendly to other existences.' He solves the difficulty by denying the existence of ideas. There are no such 'images of external things' in the mind, but sensation is accompanied by an act of perception, and the object of perception is the real external thing.

Hume had said that his difficulties would vanish if our perceptions inhered in something simple and individual, or if the mind perceived some real connection among them; and Reid proposes a positive theory of knowledge which will give the required assurance on this point. Every sensation is accompanied by a 'natural and original judgment' which refers the sensation to mind as its act. We do not need, first of all, to get the two things 'mind' and 'sensation' and then to connect them; 'one of the related things—to wit sensation—suggests to us both the correlate and the relation.' Reid's terminology is not happy. The word 'suggests' is badly chosen, though he distinguishes this 'natural suggestion' from the suggestion which is the result of experience and habit. And his term 'common sense' has given rise to more serious misunderstandings, for which he is by no means blameless. Even his doctrine of immediate perception is far from clear. But, if we read him sympathetically, we may see that he had hold of a truth of fundamental importance. The isolated impressions or ideas with which Locke and Hume began are fictions; they do not correspond to anything real in experience. The simplest portion of our experience is not separate from its context in this way; it implies a reference to mind and to an objective order, and thus involves the relations which Reid ascribed to 'natural suggestion' or 'common sense.'

## CHAPTER XV

### DIVINES

WITH the beginning of the eighteenth century, we reach a period in English theological literature of which the character is not less definite because there were individual writers who struggled against it. The matter and the style alike were placid and unemotional, rational rather than learned, tending much more to the commonplace than to the pedantic, and, above all, abhorrent of that dangerous word, and thing, enthusiasm. Johnson's definition gives a significant clue to the religious literature in which his contemporaries had been educated. Enthusiasm, in his *Dictionary*, is (from Locke) 'a vain belief of private revelation, a vain confidence of divine favour,' to which even the nonconformists, if one may judge by the subjects of their books, had, in the early eighteenth century, abandoned all special claim; and, also, it implied, in Johnson's own view, 'heat of imagination' and 'violence of passion.' From this, the main current of theological writing, for more than fifty years, ran conspicuously away. The mystics, such as William Law, as has been shown in an earlier chapter<sup>1</sup>, were strange exceptions, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto* of this decorous self-restraint or complacency. It was not till Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians completed the impression which *A Serious Call* had made on the heart of John Wesley that the literature of religion received a new impetus and inspiration; and the old school fought long and died hard. It was not till the word enthusiasm could be used in their condign praise that English theologians began to feel again something of the fire and poetry of their subject, and, once more, to scale its heights and sound its depths. And yet, as we say this, we are confronted by evident

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ix, chap. xii, *ante*, and cf. Byrom's poem 'Enthusiasm,' with introduction on the use of the word, in *The Poems of John Byrom*, ed. Ward, A. W., vol. II (1895). See, also, *ibid.* vol. III (1912), p. 118 and note.

exceptions. No one can deny the power of Butler's writing, whatever it may be the fashion to assert as to the depth of his thought; and, while there was fire enough in Atterbury, in Wilson there was certainly the delicate aroma of that intimate sincerity which has in all literature an irresistible charm. Some earlier writers may be left aside, such as Richard Cumberland, who, though a bishop, was rather a philosopher than a theologian, and Samuel Johnson, the Ben Jochanan of Dryden, whose divinity was not more than an excrescence on his fame as a whig pamphleteer who suffered excessively for his opinions. His manner of writing was unquestionably savage. *Julian the Apostate: Being a Short Account of his Life; the sense of the Primitive Christians about his Succession; and their Behaviour towards him. Together with a comparison of Popery and Paganism* (1682), is more vehement and obnoxious than most of those bitter attacks on James duke of York with which the press groaned during the last years of Charles II; yet its author hardly deserved degradation from the priesthood, the pillory and whipping from Newgate to Tyburn. As the chaplain of Lord William Russell, Johnson might be expected to speak boldly: and his writing was full of sound and fury, as a characteristic sentence—a solitary one, be it observed—from his *Reflections on the History of Passive Obedience* may show.

I have reason to enter a just Complaint against the pretended Church-of-England Men of the two last Beigns, who not only left me the grinning Honour of maintaining the establish'd Doctrine of the Church all alone, (which I kept alive, till it pleased God to make it a means of our Deliverance, with the perpetual hazard of my own life for many years, and with suffering Torments and Indignities worse than Death) but also beside this, were very zealous in running me down, and very officious in degrading me, as an Apostate from the Church of England for this very Service: While at the same time, they themselves were making their Court with their own Renegado Doctrine of Passive Obedience; and wearing out all Pulpits with it, as if it had been, not only the First and Great Commandment, but the Second too; and swimming it down the reluctant throats of dying Patriots, as the Terms of their Salvation.

We may begin the tale with Francis Atterbury. He was born in 1663, and his upbringing, at the quiet Buckinghamshire rectory of Milton Keynes, by a father who had been suspect of disloyalty for his compliance with the commonwealth and, probably, atoned for it by an exaggerated attachment to the restored Stewarts, was in the strictest principles of the establishment in church and state. A Westminster boy and student of Christ Church, he became prominent among the scholars of his day, and his contribution to the

Phalaris controversy<sup>1</sup> made him famous. He took holy orders in 1687, and, before long, reached high preferment. Soon after the beginning of the century, he was archdeacon of Totnes and chaplain in ordinary to queen Anne. He became dean of Carlisle (1704), of Christ Church (1712) and of Westminster and bishop of Rochester (1713). Seven years later, he was imprisoned in the Tower, without much evidence against him, for having been concerned in a plot to restore the Stewarts. Banishment followed, and he definitely threw in his lot with the exiled family. He lived till 1732. For fifty years, he was an influential, though not a voluminous, writer. Politically, he was vehement; in religion, he was wholehearted; and the two interests seemed to him inseparable. What weighed most with him in politics, truly says his latest biographer<sup>2</sup>, was 'the consequence that the Whigs' latitudinarianism would have, and as a matter of fact did have, on the Church of England.' He was, indeed, from first to last, a 'church of England man,' of the type which the sunshine of queen Anne's favour ripened. The Hanoverian type of protestantism was uncongenial to him: he distrusted and feared its rationalising influence. In his view, as he said in the dedication of his sermons to Trelawny (famous as one of the seven bishops), 'the Fears of Popery were scarce remov'd, when Heresy began to diffuse its Venom.' Thus, he came to the position which Addison expressed in an epigram, but which, perhaps, was not so inconsistent as it seemed—'that the Church of England will always be in danger till it has a Popish king for its defender.'

If his contribution to the Phalaris controversy best exhibits his wit, and his political writing his trenchant diction, his sermons may, perhaps, be regarded as his permanent contributions to English literature. There is no conspicuous merit in their style or in their argument; but they are lucid, argumentative and, on occasion, touched by real feeling. Perhaps, his sincerity never appeared to more advantage than in the quiet pathos of his *Discourse on the death of the Lady Cutts* (1698), the opening passage of which gave at least a hint to Sterne for a very famous sermon.

Much the same may be said of Atterbury's friend George Smalridge, who succeeded him as dean of Christ Church. Smalridge was a less active Jacobite and a less vehement

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ix, chap. xiii, p. 383, *ante*.

<sup>2</sup> Beeching, H. C., *Francis Atterbury* (1909), p. 268.

man, and died peaceably, though in disgrace, as bishop of Bristol. He

toasted the Pretender in the privacy of his rooms at Christ Church, but gave him no other support; recognising, no doubt, that anything but a Platonic affection was incompatible with the Church principles of non-resistance to established authority, of which he and Atterbury had been among the foremost champions.

Some of this quietude gives tone to his sermons, which Johnson praised for their elegant style; and Addison wrote in 1718 'he is to me the most candid and agreeable of all the bishops.' Dedicated to Caroline princess of Wales—who, as queen, had a striking talent for the discovery of clever clergymen—and produced in print for an extraordinarily large number of subscribers, the sermons are more remarkable for sound sense than for eloquence or argument. The English is pure and unaffected; Addison, perhaps, is the model; but his excellence is far from being attained. Smalridge was indignant when some one thought to flatter him by suggesting that he wrote *A Tale of a Tub*: a very moderate knowledge of his style should have convinced the most obtuse that he could not have written the *Tale* if he would. In truth, he is typical of his period. The theological writings of the day had none of the learning, or the attempt at it, which had marked the Caroline epoch; they had no charm of language, no eloquence or passion. The utmost they aimed at was lucidity, and, when this was achieved, we are left wondering whether what could be so expressed was worth expressing at all. Atterbury had stood alone against the benumbing influence of Tillotson.

It needed controversy to stir the placid contentment of the early Hanoverian dignitaries. And, of controversy, vehement enough, they had their share. If Sacheverell did not contribute anything of value to English literature, the same cannot be said of Wake or even, perhaps, of Hoadly. In 1715, William Wake succeeded Tenison as archbishop. His predecessor had possessed a certain skill in anti-Roman controversy, and he had the very rare accomplishment of being able to write a good collect; but Wake was altogether his superior. In history, his translation of the Apostolic Fathers and his very important contributions to the discussion on the powers of convocation give him a place in the short list of English archbishops who have been learned men. Nor was his learning anglican only; he was better known in Germany and France, as well as in the eastern church, than any of his successors till quite modern times.\* As a controversialist, he was lucid and

graceful; but when he hit he could hit hard. The convocation controversy, though it employed the powers of Atterbury, Burnet, Hody, Kennett and Matthew Hutton of Aynho, hardly belongs to the history of literature. But it gave great opportunity for the display of that kind of antiquarian knowledge in which many of the English clergy of the time excelled. Few of those who joined in it were not; at the same time, writers of eminence in their own fields: Wake was distinguished for his studies of the Apostolic Fathers, Hody as a Hebraist, Kennett, in that admirable book *The Parochial Antiquities of Ambrosden*, a very model for local historians. And the convocation controversy was soon merged in the discussion as to the orthodoxy of certain ecclesiastics, some prominent, some undistinguished, which began with Hoadly and his views of church authority.

Benjamin Hoadly was a clergyman in whom the objectionable features of Gilbert Burnet were exaggerated to the verge of caricature. He was a whig and a follower of the government in power first of all, a controversialist in consequence, and only after that was he an ecclesiastic. As a political writer, he opposed Atterbury and Blackall in 1709—10; on the Hanoverian succession being accomplished, he was rewarded by the see of Bangor, which he hardly ever visited. In 1717, his famous sermon entitled *The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ* caused the acid controversy which was named after him; *A Preservative against the Principles and Practices of the Nonjurors*, a treatise published by him in 1716, called forth the drastic criticism of William Law; and *A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament* (1735), the massive treatise of Waterland on the doctrine of the Eucharist. He seemed to live for dispute and preferment; and he accepted both with the placid dignity which is inimitably rendered in Hogarth's immortal portrait. As a writer, he carries the sobriety of Tillotson to the extreme of pompous dulness; it is safe to say that the volumes of his sermons and other argumentative works which line many old libraries have rested for a century and a half undisturbed by any reader's hand. Their manner, which is devoid of any original touch, contrasts strangely with their matter. Hoadly's theory of churchmanship reduced itself to pure individualism tempered by toleration. He was a conscientious advocate for the repeal of the whole range of test acts. He was, in fact, a much better thinker in matters of state than in those which belonged more directly to his own profession. From under

the cloud of words and the skilful tangle of qualifications in which his thought is enveloped, there emerges the certainty that he had no coherent idea of a religious society at all. If he had points of affinity with Thomas Arnold, he is, perhaps, not very far away from the reforming theologians or even the theorists of the Middle Age. Church and state are one in his mind; but it is the state which turns church communion into something quite vague, general and ultimately unmeaning; yet he has not risen to the idea of a federation; he remains in a conception of essential fluidity. On the other hand, his advocacy of toleration, on true principles, was, if not an advance in theory on the position of several earlier English writers, of different parties, at least one in actual practice, before whig statesmen as well as anglican bishops were prepared to accept it. Hoadly became bishop of Winchester in 1734 and held the see till his death in 1761. It cannot be said that he rendered any service to the church, and the controversies of which he was the centre had no small share in that eclipse of her literary glory, which was the conspicuous characteristic of the Hanoverian, as opposed to the Stewart, age.

If Hoadly typifies the comfortable Erastianism of the leaders of the establishment, William Law's enthusiasm and depth were reproduced in not a few of the later nonjurors. It was some time before the inspiring self-sacrifice of Sancroft and Hickes and their colleagues died down into the sordid insignificance which Johnson professed to have witnessed. The spirit of literary audacity which had fled the established church was still to be found among the nonjurors. The two Thomas Wagstaffes—the father (1645—1712) nonjuring bishop of Ipswich, the son (1692—1770) English chaplain to the banished Stewarts—were writers of considerable power. The *Vindication*, by the pen of the elder, of Charles I's authorship of *Eikon Basilike*, followed by *A Defence of the Vindication*, is a work of considerable, though not of convincing, force. Both were noted as antiquaries, and belong, indeed, to the school, as we may call it, of Carte, Leslie, Rawlinson and Hearne. Thomas Deacon, again, was a scholar of no mean order with a range of theological knowledge unusual in his day. By profession a physician, he was ordained by the nonjuring bishop Gandy in 1716, and consecrated, probably in 1733, by Archibald Campbell, bishop of Aberdeen, whom Dr Johnson described as 'very curious and inquisitive but credulous.' The nonjurors (as has been seen in the case of

Hickes) were close students of liturgiology, and the revised communion office of the 'Usagers,' with the *Compleat Devotions* of 1734, bear witness to the accuracy of Deacon's study and influenced the important liturgies of the Scottish and American churches of the present day.

As may seem natural for men who found themselves compelled to live more and more apart from the general religious and even the social life of their day, the nonjurors turned to antiquarianism as a solace for their seclusion as well as a support for their doctrines. The older race of those who withdrew from communion with the national church were often men of great learning as well as steadfast principle. Henry Dodwell is a typical example. He held a fellowship at Trinity college, Dublin, but resigned it, being unwilling to take holy orders. He then resided in England, in London or Oxford at first, in later years in Berkshire. From 1688 to 1691, he was Camden professor of history at Oxford. He was deprived because he would not take the oaths; but William III is said to have declared that he would not make him a martyr—'He has set his heart on being one and I have set mine on disappointing him.' Hearne considered him 'the greatest scholar in Europe when he died,' and even such an opponent as White Kennett respected his learning. His writings are partly 'occasional' and vehement, partly deliberate and scholastic. To the former class belongs what he wrote about the schism; to the latter, his work on Irenaeus and on ancient history in general. It cannot be said that he left any permanent impression on English literature or scholarship, though his writings were long remembered and utilised by lesser men. His friends Nelson, Hearne, Cherry and the rest preserved his memory in their circle of devout ecclesiasticism. But the whole mass of the nonjurors' literary output, even work so good as that of Brett and Leslie, belongs to a backwater in English letters. One fragrant survival, however, may be mentioned here for its exquisite and simple pathos, *A Pattern for Young Students in the University, set forth in the Life of Mr Ambrose Bonwicke, sometime Scholar of St John's College in Cambridge* (1729)<sup>1</sup>. It is the record of a young nonjuror's life, told by his father, in an unaffected, but deeply touching, manner which no man of letters of the day could have surpassed. One is tempted to put beside it, for their record of devotion to duty in circumstances very different, the *Journals* of the Scottish bishop Robert Forbes (in 1762 and

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Mayor, J. E. B., Cambridge, 1870.

1770)<sup>1</sup>, a divine whose 'primitive piety' and ecclesiastical principles were supported by the same doctrines of church obedience as directed the life of the young Cambridge scholar. Men such as these must in all ages live remote from public haunt. Joseph Bingham, the greatest ecclesiastical antiquary of his time and for long after it, was incessantly active as a writer, but (save that he was unjustly stigmatised as a heretic and had to resign his fellowship at Oxford in consequence) was entirely neglected by those whose business it should have been to know what scholars wrote. His *Origines Ecclesiasticæ, or The Antiquities of the Christian Church* (published in successive volumes from 1708 to 1722) is a mine of learning, to which writers everywhere had recourse till the Cambridge scholars of the later nineteenth century began the critical rewriting of the history of the early church. Bingham, it may be said, did for church history what Pearson did for the creed. He showed what it meant at the time of its beginning and he illustrated its growth by a store of learning which none in his own time could rival, and few since have surpassed. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was, certainly, in learning rather than in pure letters that the *clerus Angliæ* preserved its reputation.

Returning from this interesting by-path, we find the main field of theology in possession of writers of scarcely a single literary merit. *The Annual Register*, when it commemorated Hoadly on his death, allowed him the virtue that, in all his controversies with his brethren ('and no one surely ever held more'), he never lost his equanimity of temper or descended to any railing accusation. In the same way, Thomas Sherlock, bishop of London, was praised in that

he too had his controversies, and those carried on with warmth and spirit, but without any injury to his temper, or any interruption to his thoughts and mind.

He was, indeed, an opponent of Hoadly even more persistent than Law. He was chairman of the committee of the lower house of convocation which considered the book that was the *sons et origines mali*; and, though, owing to the suspension of the sessions of convocation, the report was never published, its substance, no doubt, appeared in *Remarks on the Bishop of Bangor's treatment of the Clergy and Convocations*, issued by him anonymously in 1717,

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Craven, J. B., 1876.

and in other pamphlets. Sherlock's politics, in early life, were, like those of his more famous father (master of the Temple and dean of St Paul's), not above suspicion with those in power: the wits compared the two thus:

As Sherlock the elder with *jure* divine  
Did not comply till the battle of Boyne;  
So Sherlock the younger still made it a question  
Which side he should take till the battle of Preston.

But, in later life, he was a steady supporter of Walpole, and his politics even more than his preaching brought him to high place. He was appointed bishop of London in 1748, and it is said that he had declined even higher preferment. Before this, nearly all his important literary work had been done. He had engaged in the deist controversy in 1725, and his *Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* (1729) was a very notable apologetic, on quite modern lines, in answer to Woolston. Next to Butler, he was the most powerful opponent, and the most rational, whom the deists encountered. His last work, which enjoyed the popularity of a modern novel, was *A Letter to the Clergy and People of London and Westminster on occasion of the late Earthquake* (1750). Nichols, the bookseller, tells that 100,000 copies were sold in less than a month; and the trenchant vigour of its denunciation of vice and appeal for amendment make it still worthy of perusal.

But books and pamphlets such as Sherlock's are at least on the fringe of that sad class of writings which Lamb stigmatised as *biblia abiblia*. We rise far above it when we come to the work of men so different as bishop Wilson, bishop Butler and Daniel Waterland. The three men were profoundly different. Wilson, in much of his thought and life, was a survival of the early seventeenth century and, indeed, of far earlier times. Waterland, in many respects, was typical of the early eighteenth century. Butler had affinities with the nineteenth—with Newman, for example, and Gladstone. The life of Wilson was uneventful. He took his degree from Trinity college, Dublin, and was ordained in the church of Ireland, served a Lancashire curacy, became chaplain to the earl of Derby and preceptor to his son at the salary of thirty pounds a year, to which was added the mastership of the Latham almshouse, twenty pounds more—whereupon he had 'an income far beyond his expectations, far beyond his wishes, except as it increased his ability to do good'—and, in

1697, was appointed by his patron to the bishopric of Sodor and Man, in spite of his refusal. At Bishop's court, Kirk Michael, he lived, for nearly sixty years, the life of a primitive saint, devoted entirely to works of piety, the father of his people, not neglecting to punish as well as to protect. His collected works were not published till 1781; but many of them had long achieved a remarkable popularity. Of the eight volumes, four contain sermons, of a directness of appeal and simplicity of language unusual for the time. The English is forcible and unaffected; there are no pedantic expressions, or classical phrases, or lengthy words. Everyone could understand what Wilson said, and everyone might profit by it. He wrote, not to astonish, but to convince; yet the simplicity of his manner avoids the pit of commonplace into which such writers as Tillotson not rarely fall. No one could call the good bishop a great writer; but no one could call him a poor one. In his *Maxims* and his *Parochialia*, he shows a knowledge of human nature not very common among clergymen; while his *Sacra Privata*, which explains (to an intelligent reader) how this knowledge was obtained, places him with bishop Andrewes among the masters of English devotional literature.

Very different is the ponderous solidity of Daniel Waterland. He was a controversialist, a scholar and an archdeacon—callings which tend to dryness and pomposity and seldom encourage literary excellence. Master of Magdalene college, Cambridge, and vice-chancellor, he was recommended, says his biographer, 'to the favour of the government' by his 'wise and moderate sentiments,' but he did not attain to any great position in the church. He preferred, it may well be, to remain an adept in university business and a wielder of the cudgel against the heretics of his age, among whom several, such as Biddle, Firmip and Gilbert Clerke (to repeat the phrase used by bishop van Mildert nearly a century ago) 'now scarcely retain a place in our recollection.' Samuel Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712), amid all the heavy literature which it evoked, had no more successful rival than Waterland's *Vindication of Christ's Divinity*, which is almost worthy to be placed beside the work of bishop Bull; and this was but one of the writings of the Cambridge scholar which dealt with the subject. Waterland had long given attention to the claims of semi-Arians to hold office in the church of England, and, in a famous disputation, when he 'kept a Divinity Act for his Bachelor of Divinity,' had had for his opponent (who was, of

course, merely assuming the post of *advocatus arianismi*) Thomas Sherlock,

'one of the greatest ornaments of the Church, and finest writers of the age, who gave full play to his abilities, and called forth,' says a contemporary, 'all that strength of reason of which he was the master.'

Here, in spite of a certain favour which royalty was inclined to bestow upon Arianism, Waterland was safe from censure by great personages of the day. His moderation appears less favourably in his abstention from action throughout the long period during which Bentley was unjustly suspended. His learning, on the other hand, in his treatise on the Athanasian creed, a vindication of that much-contested symbol, which is even now not out of date, appears in its most favourable aspect, and the book deserved the eulogy of archbishop Dawes of York, a prelate who did not fear, even when suspected of Jacobitism, to express his opinions :

'With great pleasure I read it,' wrote the primate of England, 'both on account of the subject matter of it, and the manner in which you have treated it; the one, of the greatest importance to the Christian faith; the other, a pattern to all writers of controversy in the great points of religion.'

In 1727, he became canon of Windsor; in 1730, vicar of Twickenham and archdeacon of Middlesex; and he enjoyed 'his retirement at Twickenham,' his visits to Cambridge and the honour of being prolocutor of the lower house of the convocation of Canterbury, till his death in 1740, when an opponent offered the curious testimony to his merits that

notwithstanding his being a contender for the Trinity yet he was a benevolent man, an upright Christian and a beautiful writer; exclusive of his zeal for the Trinity, he was in everything else an excellent clergyman and an admirable scholar.

But the most famous of his writings is, undoubtedly, his *Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, which was for long regarded as the classic work of anglican theology on its subject. It is only necessary to say of the doctrine, as stated by Waterland, that it does not proceed beyond the qualified statement of the judicious Hooker and would not have satisfied Andrewes, Jeremy Taylor, or Cosin—not to mention so typical an anglican as George Herbert—among his predecessors; still less does it rise to the views which found expression in the notable work of John Johnson, *The Unbloody Sacrifice*. In his own words, Waterland advocates not a sacrificial, but a federal, view of the Eucharist. As a writer, he is lucid without being commonplace and learned without being pedantic. His prose is better than Tillotson's, easier than Butler's;

but no one would quote it for its excellence, as, in his day, men quoted the archbishop, or remember it for its massive power, as Butler must always be remembered.

Joseph Butler is, indeed, even as a master of English, conspicuously the greatest of the three writers whom we have chosen to illustrate the character of English theology during this period. The explanation is that Butler was, what the others were not, a great writer and a great man. His prose has a massive force, a sheer weight, to which no English writer of his time approaches. Under its severe restraint burns the fire of a deep and intense conviction. He has been but poorly understood by those who have regarded him as a convincing critic, a master of logical acuteness. He was far more; and what he was is revealed in every paragraph of his writing. On the one hand, his view of life and thought was synthetical, not merely inquisitive or analytic: on the other, he was inspired with a supreme belief, a mastering optimism, a triumphant faith. In the cold marble of his prose, there are veins of colour, touches of rich crimson, caerulean blue, or sunny gold, such as one sees on some beautiful ancient sarcophagus. He is a master of calm exposition, as well as of irony; but he is, even more notably, a writer of profound and unquenchable passion. His heart no less than his head is in what he has written; and it is this which gives him his place among the masters of English prose. Butler has enriched English literature with many a striking apophthegm; but his use of the language can only be adequately tested by long passages. It is difficult to select from him; he has no purple patches; page after page shines with the same massive splendour. The manner of the *Sermons* is as admirable as the matter: it is typical of the prose of his age at its very best. The style of the *Analogy* is more difficult, more compressed and concise, so that it seems at first sight to be stiff and involved; but a little study of it shows that it is intentionally, and admirably, adapted to its matter. The steps, as Gladstone said, are as carefully measured out as if we were climbing the hill of the *Purgatorio*; and each single sentence has been well compared to 'a well-considered move in chess.' From another point of view, we may again adopt the statesman's quaint retort to the criticism of Matthew Arnold:

The homely fare, upon which Butler feeds us, cannot be so gratifying to the palate as turtle, venison, and champagne. But it has been found wholesome by experience: it leads to no doctor's bills; and a perusal of this 'failure' is admitted to be 'a most valuable exercise for the mind.'

No religious book of the eighteenth century, save only Law's *Serious Call*, had so much influence as the *Analogy*, and the influence of each, different though they were, has proved abiding in English literature as well as English religion. It came without question from the same source. It has been said of Joseph Butler, that he was known to be given to religious retirement and to reading the biographies of holy persons; and, though the one was a bishop and the other a nonjuror, the words are equally applicable to William Law<sup>1</sup>.

The work of Butler is the high watermark of English theology in the middle of the eighteenth century. The descent from it is almost abrupt. Two names only remain to be specially noticed before we pass to a new period—those of Thomas Herring and Thomas Secker, both archbishops of Canterbury, who were born in the same year 1693, and died, the former in 1757, the latter in 1768. Archbishop Herring was a complete contrast to the leading prelates of his day. His sermons at Lincoln's inn gave him fame, and he passed, in a career of unemotional benevolence, from the deanery of Rochester to the sees of Bangor, York and Canterbury. He did not contend with deists or Arians, and the Athanasian controversy had for him no charms. He was prepared to revise the *Prayer-Book* and the Articles, and to exchange pulpits with dissenters. He befriended the Jews, and Hume tells us, in his *Essays*, that the archbishop praised him for his *History*. He raised a large sum for the government during the '45. But his literary work, save his rather pleasing letters, is uninteresting and ineffective. His successor at York and Canterbury, Matthew Skelton, was little thought of and soon forgotten. But with Thomas Secker, bishop in turn of Bristol and of Oxford, and archbishop of Canterbury for ten years, from 1758, we reach a higher grade. Like Butler, with whom he had been at school, and like not a few in the list of English primates, he was not till manhood converted to the English church, and, to the delicate taste of Horace Walpole, he seemed to retain to the last something of the 'tone of fanaticism' which had belonged to his early training. Yet the beginning of methodism filled him with alarm: whatever he may have shown of 'fanaticism,' he was certainly no 'enthusiast.' On his sermons, which, with his *Lectures on the Church Catechism*, were his chief work, the opinion of his

<sup>1</sup> Cf., as to Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* and *Analogy*, *ante*, vol. ix, pp. 308 f.\* As to Law, see *ibid.* chap. xii.

\*contemporaries, for once, very fairly represents what would be thought today. Hurd, the favourite bishop of George III, said that they had 'a certain conciliatory calmness, propriety, and decency of language, with no extraordinary reach of thought, vigour of sentiment, or beauty of expression.' And Christopher Pitt, when, in *The Art of Preaching*, he advises young preachers, describes the impression made by the archbishop, in words that no doubt sum up his merits :

•Speak, look, and move with dignity and ease  
Like mitred Secker, you'll be sure to please.

Secker, however, did not wear a mitre—he only wore a wig, and the literary style in which he excelled has passed away with his headgear. It was the methodist movement which swept away what seemed to it to be solemn trifling. From the middle of the eighteenth century, the new influence which passed over English religion had its effect, gradual and much contested, upon English literature also. The age of Wesley and Whitefield introduced what may be called a new romanticism in religion, just as the Lake school, half a century later, may be said to have destroyed the classic tradition of the older poetry. A word is needed as to the historical setting of this new departure in English theology.

The methodist movement was a reaction against the calmness with which English theologians had accepted, and suppressed, many of the vital elements of the Christian creed. Divinity is the most progressive of the sciences, and no literature becomes so rapidly out of date as theology—all but the highest. Admirably straightforward though much of the writing of English divines in the early eighteenth century was, it had fewer of the elements of permanence than any of the systems that had preceded it; to appropriate words of Johnson, it had not sufficient vitality to preserve it from putrefaction. A new theology, or, at least, a revival of the old, was needed, which should base its appeal on the verities of the Christian life. The young Oxford students who founded methodism were, above all things, anxious to rule their daily doings by the standard, ascetic and devotional, of the English church. It has been, in recent years, generally believed that the tendency of the movement was from the first towards separation. This is hardly true. In practice, no doubt, much that Wesley did tended to separatism; but, in theory, never. The movement which now bears his name was at first, distinctly, a church movement, owing its impetus to long neglected doctrines of the church;

and Wesley's own first direction of life came from Jeremy Taylor.\* The story of the movement, during the period now under survey, may be briefly told. John Wesley, son of the rector of Epworth, went to Charterhouse in 1713 and to Christ Church in 1720, and became a fellow of Lincoln college in 1726. The society founded, very soon after, by his brother Charles, a student of Christ Church, was composed of a few pious young men who desired to live by the church's rules of fasting, almsgiving and prayer, and received the holy communion weekly. Southey, writing nearly a century later, thought that 'such conduct would at any time have attracted observation in an English university.' Unpopular, these beginnings certainly were, but it was not long before they passed beyond the petty criticisms of Oxford. John Wesley joined this 'Holy Club' on his return to college in 1729, and he remained at Oxford for some years, actively engaged in works of piety.

Among the earlier members of the society were two destined for great public fame. The first was George Whitefield, perhaps the greatest popular orator of the eighteenth century. He had traced in himself, he tells, from cradle to manhood, nothing but 'a fitness to be damned'; but the fiery enthusiasm of his nature seems always to have been turned toward the light, and, from his entrance into the methodist company, he became a devoted worker and preacher. John Wesley went to America in 1735, Charles in 1736, Whitefield in 1738. The freedom of missionary work rendered each of them disposed to new religious influences, and John Wesley and George Whitefield gradually drifted apart from each other and from the accepted theology of the English church. Wesley was greatly influenced by the Moravians and especially by their very attractive apostle count Zinzendorf, Whitefield by the Calvinism which seemed to be dying a natural death in the church of England till his influence revived it. Wesley dated his conversion from 24 May 1738; and, soon afterwards, he began his wonderful journeys, which lasted almost to his death. During the half-century, he preached forty thousand sermons, and travelled (it is said) a quarter of a million of miles. His brother Charles equalled him in devotion, if not in tireless health, and Whitefield in enthusiasm. In 1740, Wesley severed his connection with the Moravians, and, in 1743, the followers of Whitefield became distinguished as Calvinistic methodists. In 1764, the separation between the two methodist bodies became permanent, and, from that time, perhaps, it may be correct to date the creation, from the original movement, of a newly organised

assent. Though Wesley himself passionately desired, to the end, to belong to the church of his baptism and ordination and vigorously denounced all who separated from it, in 1784 (when his brother Charles, who deeply regretted the act, thought him to be in his dotage) he ordained ministers, and, from that moment, the separation was complete. Whitefield, who was the founder of the Calvinistic methodists, Lady Huntingdon's connection, died in 1770. At that date, it may be well to conclude our brief survey. The prominent names which belong especially to this earlier period, when what came to be called evangelicalism was hardly distinguishable from methodism, are those of the two Wesleys, Whitefield, Hervey, Toplady and Fletcher of Madeley. The influence of Newton, Venn, Romaine and others, more definitely evangelical than methodist, belongs chiefly to a later period.

Whitefield was not a man of letters, but an orator. His literary work is negligible, though not uninteresting; but it marks more decisively than that of any of his contemporaries the earliest reaction against the commonsense religious writing of the age. Whitefield wrote plain English, the vernacular of his day, with a touch of the university added, just as Latimer did two hundred years before. But he was not nearly so great a writer as was the reformer, probably because of his being a far greater preacher. To quote from his sermons or his controversial writings would be useless: he began a venture rather than led a school. And not all his friends followed his style.

The first to be mentioned after Whitefield was almost a complete contrast to him. There can be no doubt that the most popular writer among those who were influenced by the earlier stages of the methodist movement was James Hervey, who was at Lincoln college, Oxford, as an undergraduate when John Wesley was a fellow and, after serving in Cornwall, became rector of two parishes, not adjoining each other, Collingtree and Weston Favell, in Northamptonshire. He was a most excellent man and an exemplary parish priest, but he escaped controversy as little as did any other of the evangelical company. His disputes with Wesley are of no importance in literary history, and his curious dialogues, on his favourite doctrine of 'imputed righteousness' and other opinions which he extracted from the Gospels, entitled *Theron and Aspasia*, have long ceased to interest even the most assiduous student. But his *Meditations Among the Tombs*, *Reflections on a Flower-garden* and *Contemplations on the Night*, which met

with extraordinary success in their day, illustrate most effectively the fantastic and affected style which the most sincere writers of the time, save the robust John Wesley himself, seemed to assume with their 'pulpit manner,' till it became a second nature to them. A passage from Hervey's *Contemplations on the Night* may be quoted here, since it would be difficult to find a more striking example of the descent of popular taste in the darkest period of English letters. The thoughts might be found in Jeremy Taylor; but how different is the pompous and posturing performance with which Hervey seeks to impress the reader from the plangent feeling which inspires Taylor even in his richest and most gorgeous prose! In Hervey, the ideas are impoverished and the expression is at once affected and commonplace.

We need not go down to the charnel house, nor carry our search into the repositories of the dead, in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of these remembrancers are placed in all our paths, and point the heedless passengers to their long home. I can hardly enter a considerable town but I meet a funeral procession, or the mourners going about the streets. The hatchment suspended on the wall, or the crape streaming in the air, are silent intimations that both rich and poor have been emptying their houses, and replenishing their sepulchres. I can scarce join in any conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the physician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others that have just dropt their clay among weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the earth. There's not a newspaper comes to my hand, but, amidst all its entertaining narrations, reads several serious lectures of mortality. What else are the repeated accounts—of age, worn out by slow-consuming sicknesses—of youth, dashed to pieces by some sudden stroke of casualty—of patriots, exchanging their seats in the senate for a lodging in the tomb—of misers, resigning their breath, and (O relentless destiny!) leaving their very riches for others! Even the vehicals of our amusement are registers of the deceased! and the voice of Fame seldom sounds but in concert with the knell!

From this, the transition to John William Fletcher is agreeable. He is one of the examples, more common in the seventeenth, than in the eighteenth, century, of the attractive power of the English church, its system and its theology, for he was born in Switzerland (his name was de La Flechère); but he became a priest of the English church and gave his life to the work of an English village. His anti-Calvinist views severed him from Lady Huntingdon's connection, with which, for a time, he was associated as superintendent of her training college at Trevecca, but endeared him the more to Wesley, who preached his funeral sermon from the text 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.' Never was there a controversialist more honest or more gentle. The title of his

\* *Zelotus and Honestus Reconciled; or an Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism*, which includes parts I. and II. of *Scriptures Scales to weigh the gold of Gospel truth, and to balance a multitude of opposite Scriptures*, gives a misleading idea of the wit and charm of its contents. Fletcher writes gracefully and truthfully. He has the tendency to gloom in which Hervey revelled; but he does not parade it. He has a wholesome detestation of his opponent's Calvinism; but it leads him, not to sound and fury, but to placid and conciliatory argument. Southey well summed up the character of Fletcher's writing when he said that

his talents were of the quick mercurial kind; his fancy was always active, and he might have held no inconsiderable rank, both as a humourous and as an impassioned writer, if he had not confined himself wholly to devotional subjects.

He was the St Francis of early methodism, and it seems the most natural thing in the world to be told that, one day, he took a robin for his text. If other leaders of the movement were stern, his was always the voice of tenderness and charity. By way of contrast, we may, like Southey, take the vehement denunciations of Augustus Toplady, who deserves to be remembered for the immortal hymn 'Rock of Ages,' while his *The Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England* best remains buried in oblivion. He wrote with coarse vigour, smartness and *abandon*, in complete contrast alike to the preciousness of Hervey and to the calm of Fletcher. His quarrel with John Wesley, which from theological became personal, makes curious reading today. Wesley declared that Toplady's doctrine might be summed up thus—

One in twenty of mankind is elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned.

Toplady replied by accusing his critic of satanic guilt and shamelessness in thus describing his opinion and answered him, after the manner of Martin Marprelate, with *An Old Fox tarred and feathered* and suchlike pamphlets. Wesley, he declared, was an Arminian, which meant that he had

an equal portion of gross Heathenism, Pelagianism, Mahometanism, Popery, Manichaeism, Banterism and Antinomianism, culled, dried, and pulverised, and mingled with as much palpable Atheism as you can scrape together.

Literary squabbles do not lose their bitterness when they become theological.

Of John Wesley himself, as a writer, it need only be said that he was, with the pen as with the tongue, a master of direct English and simple strength. Southey chose a passage in which he summed up his chief answer to the Calvinists, as 'the most remarkable and powerful in all his works' to illustrate his theology. It, also, illustrates his style. A few sentences will suffice to show the kind of writer he was. His manner is eminently that of an orator. The sentences are short, the points clear, the assertion incisive, the repetition emphatic: 'Here I fix my fort'—'Let it mean what it will it cannot mean that'—'Hold! what will you prove by Scripture? That God is worse than the devil? It cannot be.' Here we have the familiar trick of the special pleader. He asks his opponent a question, supplies an answer on his behalf, and then knocks him on the head for it. This manner has the appearance of logic; but, often, a fallacy lurks behind. As a theologian, whatever else he is, he is smart, direct, deeply serious and utterly uncompromising.

But Wesley is not only remembered by his theological writings and his work as an evangelist. His *Journal* has all the charm of a pious Pepys, and, now that it is being published as it was written, the world can see through it closely into the writer's heart, as in the curious account of his love for Grace Murray<sup>1</sup>. In pathos and descriptive power, its simple narrative shows the rugged force of Walt Whitman: the word is not sought for, it comes naturally, and, one feels, is inevitable. Whether one reads the Savannah journal, with its marvellous record of faith, inconsistency and courage, or the unvarnished record of the long years of laborious ministry, one meets the same straight-forward, clear-eyed observer, enthralled by the Divine vision which he saw and tried to make known among men, yet full of humour and observant, to the very minutest detail, of everything that concerns the daily life of mankind. When he scolded or denounced, he thought that he was showing 'that childlike openness, frankness, and plainness of speech manifest to all in the Apostles and first Christians.' He had no doubt of himself, nor any of God's constant guidance and protection. This gives to his everyday life, in all its realism, a touch of romance, which shines through the stupendous record of what he did and said. In the *Journal*, we see how English

<sup>1</sup> See Leger, Augustin, *John Wesley's Last Love* (1910).

•divinity was breaking from the trammels of its literary convention, and the deliverer was John Wesley. If we judge the *Journal* with the life which it lays bare, it is one of the great books of the world.

No one would call John Wesley a man of letters. He had no horror, such as Hervey's, of literature which was not spiritual. He read Prior, and Home (of *Douglas* fame), Thomson, Lord Chesterfield and Sterne: he delighted to quote the classics. But he had not the taste for 'style' which was born in his brother Charles. John was no poet; but Charles, among his six thousand hymns, has left some verses that will never die. In his case, we see that, after all, methodism was not entirely apart from the literature of its day. He reminds us, again and again, of his contemporaries, especially, perhaps, of Shenstone, for whose rather thin sentiment he substitutes a genuine piety. He can be virile, felicitous, vivid; if his sweetness often cloy, he has a depth of feeling which frequently brings him within the ranks of the poets. Though he might feel strange in the company of Crashaw or George Herbert, of Newman or Keble, Christina Rossetti would take him by the hand. In English literature, so long as the hymns of Charles, and the *Journal* of John, Wesley are read, methodism will continue to hold an honoured place.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE LITERATURE OF DISSENT

1660—1760

THE narrowness of intellectual life and sterility of spiritual life which fell upon the dissenting churches after the exclusion of 1662 were the outcome of a long chain of historical development. When dissent succumbed, yielding itself, body and soul, to the dehumanising genius of Calvin, it entered upon two—indeed, nearer three—centuries of wandering in a stony wilderness. During its birthtime in the middle and latter part of the sixteenth century, during the period of its trial in the early seventeenth century and during the short span of its chequered and flickering triumph under the commonwealth, the main concern and preoccupation of dissent was with the mere question of church membership. The arid discussions on church polity centred in this idea; the still more arid discussions on doctrine were aroused simply by the demand for a standard of the church member's doctrinal purity, and the chief contention with the state was waged round the demand for a church control of admission to the sacrament—the wielding of the wooden sword of excommunication. The rock upon which this inveterate purpose split was not so much Erastianism as the national consciousness of the English race itself; and when, as the logical result of a century of historical development, dissent was driven out in 1662, it was pitting itself not so much against the church of England as against this English national consciousness. Throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century, and nearly through the whole of the eighteenth century, dissent remained true to the cramped and narrow basis on which it had been reared. If the church of England was sunk in lethargy, dissent was sunk in puny congregational and individual selfishness. Of any true missionary sense, of any conception of humanity as

apart from religious system, dissent was even more devoid—because more deliberately devoid—than was the established church. With the one noble exception of Philip Doddridge (and, possibly, a generation earlier, of Richard Davis of Rothwell), it was not until the missionary fervour, the wide and intense humanity, of the methodist movement had revived the church, that it, also, and in the last instance, revived dissent. From that moment—towards quite the close of the eighteenth century, and with gathering force in the nineteenth—dissent has deserted its historical basis of dogma and polity, has ceased to war with the national consciousness, and has taken up the burden of Christ.

This main aspect of the historical evolution of dissent will be found mirrored in its literature. But there are two other aspects of that evolution which, also, demand attention, and these are aspects which found relatively much greater expression in that literature. The free churches claim the credit of the assertion of the principle of toleration. Historically, the claim is untenable, for, during its transient triumph under the commonwealth, dissent was intolerant and persecuting, or tried to be. The enunciation of the principle came from laymen, and from those sectaries whom the entrenched and enthroned presbyterian wished to persecute. Dissent was converted to the principle only by itself passing under the fiery sword; and, when, in the eighteenth century, it became the mouthpiece of the demand for toleration, it was such merely as asserting for itself a principle, and claiming for itself the protection and benefit of that principle, which was in the air, and which grew organically with the self-consciousness of the nation. But, in so far as they put forth these claims, the free churches gave birth to a considerable literature, which, though controversial in purpose, is not the less of account in any record of English eighteenth century literature at large.

Secondly—and this is most important of all—the process of disintegration, which, after 1662, overtook all three dissenting bodies—presbyterians, congregationalists and baptists—alike loosened the bands of doctrinal narrowness. One and all, they took the path which led through Arianism to unitarianism. To tell the story of that development is to recount not merely the general history of the three bodies themselves, but, also, the particular history of a very large proportion of the individual congregations nominally composing those bodies. Such a survey would, of course, be out of place here. But the literature which grew out of that

development is of the greatest importance on a higher plane, as literature pure and simple, as a contribution to human thought, as well as on the lower plane of mere theological controversy.

Professedly, the three denominations of protestant dissenters are the presbyterians, the congregationalists and the baptists. But, as a matter of fact, after the secession of 1662, these terms—or the churches they profess to designate—are in a state of incessant flux; and it is dangerous to use the names in a general sense as applicable to three bodies with defined boundaries. The presbyterian churches became, perforce, congregational; some of the congregational churches became, of choice, baptist, or *vice versa*; and all three types took on Arianism as a garb. According to the particular bias or intellectual momentum of a particular pastor, a congregation might pass from one extreme limit to the other. In dealing, therefore, with the mere personal side of dissenting literature, we shall find it unsafe and difficult to employ the ordinary terminology of dissent.

Although a theological literature of a certain sort, originating in separation and directed against secular rule in spiritual things, was in existence even before the period under present consideration, it may be safely asserted that the ultimate basis of the conception of toleration rested on the unadulterated Erastianism of the English reformation settlement. Such a literature<sup>1</sup>, on the one side, and, equally, Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying* (1646), on the other, alike betray their genesis by their birth-time. Those who were not tolerated pleaded for toleration; and from this necessity sprang the bare assertion of the principle of liberty of conscience. Their advocacy, therefore, has not the value in the history of human thought which the pure and naked assertion of the principle possesses in the mouth of Henry Robinson, merchant and economist, of Hobbes<sup>2</sup>, of Milton<sup>3</sup> or of Locke<sup>4</sup>. But the final achievement of the pure principle of toleration and freedom of conscience came neither from the theologian nor from the philosopher. It came from the social secular sense of the race, and fought its way to victory through the mere mechanism and clash of church and state politics. And, so far as the result achieved is concerned, the only difference between the enforced, if restricted, tolerance established by Cromwell, and the gradually won legislative tolerance of eighteenth and nineteenth century

<sup>1</sup> For some of the productions belonging to it, see bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> *Leviathan*, pt III, chaps. 41 and 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Areopagitica*.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters on Toleration*.

dissent, consists in the fact that, under Cromwell, the executive constrained and led the social sense, while, in later ages, the social sense constrained and led the legislature. With the mere political history of the principle we are, however, not concerned, but only with the expression which that history found in dissenting literature.

Broadly speaking, the literary battle about the principle of toleration passes through two quite distinct phases in the period here under review. If we pass by the earlier toleration controversy in Charles II's reign, as not possessing any permanent importance either in literature or in ecclesiastical history, its first real phase covers the episodes of the Toleration act of William III's reign, the Occasional Conformity bill and the Schism act. In this phase, dissent is on the defensive and concerned merely with vindicating its claim to civil and religious rights and freedom. In the second and later phase, it boldly challenges the very principle of an established church, or, as we should say today, raises the question of disestablishment.

Naturally enough, the earlier phase of this battle, from the point of view of literature, lacks the high ethical quality that marks the later phase. For, in the various skirmishes concerning the Toleration and Schism acts, the attitude of dissent was paltering and opportunist. In truth, the achievement of the Toleration act of 1689 was rather the work of such exponents of the secular or civil sense of the nation as Burnet, Somers, Maynard and Sir Isaac Newton; and the dissenters, who, because of their hatred of Rome, had refused the indulgences of Charles II and James II, were content to accept meekly the state-given toleration of 1689, while, as a body, supinely looking on at the legislative interment of the comprehension scheme of the same year. Only Baxter and Calamy and Howe could see far enough, and high enough, to deplore the failure of that scheme, remaining, in this respect, true to their unwavering attitude in the comprehension scheme of 1667—8, as well as in the controversy with Stillingfleet of 1680. And, during the interval between the Toleration act and the Schism act, dissent showed its mettle and its conception of the pure principle of toleration, by intolerantly attacking Socinianism, as if all the intervening years, from the Westminster assembly to the Exeter meetings, had gone for nothing.

Out of this limited conception and attitude of mere political opportunism, dissent was rudely awakened by a layman. From the point of view of consistency and principle—of logic and

morality—Defoe condemned the practice of occasional conformity<sup>1</sup>. His completely unanswerable *Enquiry into the occasional Conformity of Dissenters in Cases of Preferment* (1697) drew from John Howe a deplorably ill-tempered and futile reply, *Some Considerations of a Preface to an Enquiry* (1701). With Defoe's rejoinder to this in the same year, *A Letter to Mr Howe by way of Reply*, the controversy temporarily closed. But, unintentionally, Defoe had delivered his friends into the hands of the enemy. The tory reactionaries of Anne's reign seized with avidity the weapon he had forged, and, coupling the subject of dissenting academies with the subject of occasional conformity, delivered a furious onslaught on the whole front of dissent. The scurrilous and rabid attack on dissent generally, and on dissenting academies in particular, which was opened by Sacheverell and Samuel Wesley, was met, on the one hand, by Defoe's *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702)<sup>2</sup> and, on the other hand, by Samuel Palmer's *Vindication* (1705). But, neither matchless sarcasm nor sober logic could avail. The theological torrent became a popular tory avalanche. The publication of Calamy's *Abridgement of the Life of Baxter* (1702) only added fuel to the fire. It was answered by Olyffe, and, again, by Hoadly (in *The Reasonableness of Conformity*, 1703), to whom Calamy replied in his *Defence of Moderate Nonconformity* (1703). Other tracts on both sides followed; but the mere literary strife was quickly swallowed up in the popular agitation about Sacheverell's case.

The Hanoverian succession broke the storm; and, with the reversal of the Schism act and the Occasional Conformity act, the religious existence and civil freedom of dissent were safe. But the paltering and merely opportunist attitude of the leaders of the free churches was responsible for the failure to secure the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts. Accordingly, for the remainder of our period, dissent went halting, content with the *regium donum* and with a religious tolerance tempered by partial civil disability. Samuel Chandler's *History of Persecution* (1736) and *The Case of Subscription* (1748) are fairly typical of this attitude. Had it not been for the genius of Watts and Towgood, eighteenth century dissent would appear to have exhausted its zeal for freedom of conscience in the mere selfish assertion of its own right to existence; for, so far as the purely political battle for freedom is concerned, it did not achieve any further triumph until the dawn

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ante*, vol. ix, chap. i, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.* p. 9.

of the nineteenth century. But, in 1731, a completely new turn was given to the old controversy by Isaac Watts's *Humble attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians*. In this work, and in his later *Essay on Civil Power in Things Sacred*, Watts defended the general position of dissenters by arguing on lofty grounds against any civil establishment of a national church. While thus, in one sense, reverting to the standpoint of seventeenth century philosophy, Watts, in another sense, opens a new era in these publications. They foreshadow the claim of dissent for the achievement of equality by the way of disestablishment. The cause of a national church—of the connection between the episcopal church and the English state—was taken up by William Warburton in his *Alliance between Church and State* (1736), written from the point of view of the state rather than of the church, and presenting, surely, the most utilitarian theory of the English church ever produced by a representative churchman<sup>1</sup>.

From the lower ground of mere hand to mouth polemics, Watts's treatises were also answered by John White in his *Three Letters to a Gentleman Dissenting from the Church of England*—letters which, in spite of the popularity which they enjoyed with the church party, would be otherwise inconsiderable, were it not that they gave birth to one of the most enduring monuments of the polemics of dissent. White's *Letters* were demolished by Micajah Towgood, presbyterian minister at Crediton. In *The Dissenting Gentleman's Answer to the Reverend Mr White's Letter* (1746—8), Towgood gave to the world one of the most powerful and widely read pleas for disestablishment that dissent ever produced. So far as the literature of dissent on the subject of toleration and freedom of conscience is concerned, this monumental work is the last word spoken in the period here treated; for the activity of the dissenters' committee of deputies (a dissenters' defence board in the matter of civil disabilities) was entirely legal and secular in its motive and expression<sup>2</sup>.

The controversial literature of dissent on the subjects of church polity and dogma covers the field of a whole series of successive disputes. Although, in these disputes, there is a constant shifting of the ground, yet the driving impulse, at bottom, is only one of

<sup>1</sup> As to Warburton, cf. *ante*, vol. ix, pp. 296—7.

<sup>2</sup> This is shown, for instance, by such cases as the corporation of London v. Sheafe, Streatfield and Evans (1754—67). Lord Mansfield's judgment in this important case is only another proof—if further proof were needed—that freedom was achieved not so much by dissent leading the national civic sense as by the national civic sense leading church and dissent alike.

freedom. At the outset, this freedom is purely ecclesiastical, the irresponsibility of a congeries of churches now, at last, cut asunder from the establishment. But it was inevitable that, in the end, such ecclesiastical freedom should loosen the bonds of dogmatic authority also, and so pave the way for pure free thought. Although the two paths of development often ran side by side, and crossed and recrossed, yet, historically, the ecclesiastical is the precedent and necessary condition of dogmatic freedom. By ecclesiastical freedom is here meant, not merely that, after the ejection of 1662, dissent was, or was to become, free of the yoke of the episcopal church, but that, within the limits of dissent itself, all bonds of authority had been destroyed. In the seventeenth century, a presbyterian system which had not the sanction of the state behind it was left without any compulsory force at all; and, as a system, it instantly fell to pieces. In addition, dissent had inherited from the commonwealth days the heritage of the curse of Cain—the internecine warfare of independent and presbyterian. In the later days of the commonwealth, feeble attempts had been made to heal that strife, and, when thirty years of later persecution had chastened their mood, the attempts were revived with the passing of the Toleration act. In the so-called ‘happy union,’ which was established in London in 1691 by agreement between the independent and presbyterian bodies, it was fondly hoped that, at last, the foundation had been laid for a church polity of dissent. But the disintegrating force of irresponsibility soon laid low these builded hopes. In London, the association of the two bodies endured only a brief four years, and, although in the country ‘the heads of the agreement’ of this union became somewhat widely adopted, and were worked out into the scheme of county or provincial associations and unions, these lived but a palsied and flickering life, and possess little true organic connection with modern county unions.

Although the deep underlying causes of this disruption were inherent in the life history of dissent, it was natural that the actual expression which the disintegrating principle took on should be one of controversy. The first form which this took was the so-called neonomian controversy. In 1690, the sermons of Tobias Crisp, a royalist but Calvinistic divine, were republished by his son with certain additional matter, to which he had obtained the *imprimatur* of several London dissenting ministers. The popularity of the book revived the spirit of the ultra-Calvinist section of dissent, at a time when Calvinism was losing its hold. To check the rising

'spirit of antinomianism which Crisp's fantastic Calvinism encouraged, the presbyterian ministers of London deputed Daniel Williams to reply to the book. His reply, *Gospel Truth stated and vindicated* (1692), though moderate and non-partisan in tone, and aiming only at the establishment of a *via media* between legalism and antinomianism, merely increased the storm. Williams's own orthodoxy was impeached, charges of neo-nomianism, of Arminianism and Socinianism were hurled against him by Stephen Lobb and by Isaac Chawney, an independent, in his *Neo-Nomianism Unmasked* (1693), and Williams's *Defence* (1693) failed to still the commotion<sup>1</sup>. In the following year, Williams was prohibited from preaching his 'turn' to the united ministers at the merchants' lecture in Pinners' hall. The presbyterians, accordingly, withdrew and established their own lecture at Salters' hall, leaving the independents in possession of the Pinners' hall lectures. In spite of all attempts at reconciliation, the dispute wrecked the 'happy union,' to which the independents' self-defence, in their *History of the Union* (1698), and Williams's own *Peace with Truth, or an end to Discord* (1699) only served as funeral elegies.

To this controversy succeeded that concerning occasional conformity which has been already mentioned above. But all these pale in their significance before the Subscription controversy—the doctrinal dispute aroused by the spread of Arianism. Under the commonwealth, Socinianism (represented by Paul Best and John Biddle), Sabellianism (by John Fry), Arianism (by John Knowles, Thomas Collier and Paul Hobson) and universalism (by Richard Coppin, John Reeve and Ludowicke Muggleton), had been alike banned and persecuted. The intolerant attitude of both presbyterians and independents was continued after the restoration; and to this was now added the rigour of the reestablished English church. \* To Richard Baxter, not less than to John Owen or to Stillingfleet, the Socinians were on a par with 'Mohammadans, Turks, atheists and papists. But, in spite of persecution, the discrete strands of varying anti-Trinitarian thought remained unbroken. Gilbert Clerke of Northamptonshire, a mathematician and, in a sense, a teacher of Whiston, Noval of Tydd St Giles near Wisbech, Thomas Firmin (Sabellian), William Penn, Stephen Nye (Sabellian), William Freke (Arian), John Smith, the philomath, of St Augustine's London (Socinian), Henry Hedworth, the

<sup>1</sup> See Calamy, *Account*, vol. 1, p. 387, where 'the one side' may be roughly read as independents and 'the other side' as presbyterians.

disciple of Biddle, and William Manning, minister of Peasenhall (1630—1711) (independent), form a direct and unbroken, though irregular, chain of anti-Trinitarian thought, extending from the commonwealth days to those of toleration—not to mention the more covert but still demonstrable anti-Trinitarianism of Milton and Locke.

With the passing of the Toleration act of 1689, the leaven of this long train of anti-Trinitarian thought made itself strongly felt. It first appeared in the bosom of the church of England itself, in the so-called Socinian controversy. In 1690, Arthur Bury, a latitudinarian divine, was deprived of the rectorship of Lincoln college, Oxford, for publishing his *Naked Gospel*. The proceedings gave rise to a stream of pamphlet literature on both sides. In the same year, 1690, John Wallis, Savilian professor of mathematics at Oxford, was involved in a controversy with a succession of anonymous Arian and Socinian writers (among them William Jones) by the publication of his *Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity briefly Explained*. Simultaneously, Sherlock's *Vindication of the Holy and ever Blessed Trinity*, although directed against the same group of writers, called forth another outburst of pamphleteering from quite another quarter; South leading the attack with his *Animadversions upon Dr Sherlock's Vindication*. The first portion of the anti-Trinitarian literature produced in this triangular contest is collected in *The Faith of one God Who is only the Father* (1691). In the ranks of dissent, the same controversy manifested itself in the disputes which wrecked the independent and presbyterian 'happy union' and, contemporaneously, it appeared in the baptist body. In 1693, Matthew Caffyn, baptist minister at Horsham, Sussex, was for a second time accused before the 'Baptist General Assembly' of denying Christ's divinity; and, when the assembly refused to vote his expulsion, a secession took place, and the rival 'Baptist General Association' was formed. In the same year, the anti-Trinitarians published a *Second collection of tracts proving the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true God* (1693). The tenth, and last tract, in this volume was a reply to South's *Animadversions* on Sherlock's *Vindication*. In the following year (1694), the presbyterian John Howe entered the field with his *Calm and sober Enquiry* directed against the above tract, and, to make the fight triangular, Sherlock replied to South and Howe together in *A Defence of Dr Sherlock's notion of a Trinity in Unity*. The anti-Trinitarians' *Third collection of Tracts*, which

\*followed immediately, was a reply at once to Howe, on the one hand, and to Sherlock, on the other.

This first Trinitarian or so-called Socinian controversy, practically, came to an end in 1708. It received its deathblow, in 1698, by the act for the more effectual suppression of blasphemy and profaneness, which remained on the statute book till 1813. With the exception of John Smith's *Designed End to the Socinian Controversy* (1695), the whole of the anti-Trinitarian contributions to it had been anonymous (both Locke and Sir Isaac Newton are supposed to have contributed under the cover of this anonymity); and, with the exception of Howe, no representatives of the professed dissenting denominations had joined in the fray. It is therefore to be regarded, primarily, as a church of England controversy, in which the churchmen had weakened the Trinitarian cause by a triangular and virtually conflicting defence: Sherlock *versus* South *versus* Tillotson and Burnet, and all four *versus* the enemy. The agitation which the controversy produced among the dissenters was mainly reflex, and is apparent more in their domestic quarrels, noted above, than in their published literature. But, disproportionately small as was the dissenting share of the combatants in mere point of literature, the intellectual ferment which ensued in following years showed itself more in the bosom of dissent than in the life and thought of the church of England. Thomas Emlyn, a presbyterian, who was tried at Dublin, in 1693, for publishing his *Humble Enquiry into the Scripture account of Jesus Christ*, attributed his own Arianism to Sherlock's *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*.

But the Arian controversy, properly so-called, does not owe anything to Emlyn. It was, rather, opened by William Whiston's *Historical Preface* (1710), prefixed to his *Primitive Christianity* (1711), and Samuel Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712). Although, however, Whiston finally joined the general baptists and claimed to have influenced Peirce of Exeter, the importance of this second controversy is, so far as dissent is concerned, rather practical or constitutional than literary. Among the dissenters, it assumed a particularly accentuated form of the subscription controversy. In 1717, James Peirce and Joseph Hallett, presbyterian ministers of Exeter, were taken to task locally for Arianism. In the Exeter assembly of May 1719, an attempt to enforce subscription to the first of the thirty-nine articles brought about a split. In the same year, \*the matter came before the committee of the deputies of the three denominations of protestant dissenters at Salters' hall

meeting-house, London—the so-called Salters' hall synod. Here, the question of subscription followed a clean-cut line of cleavage. The congregationalists, in the main, under the lead of Thomas Bradbury, insisted on subscription; the presbyterians, in the main, under the lead of John Barrington Shute, afterwards viscount Barrington, resisted the proposal as an unnecessary imposition of a creed. As a result, the whole body of dissent was divided into three parties—non-subscribers, subscribers and neutrals. The minority of subscribers, being defeated, withdrew from the synod and formed a distinct meeting under Bradbury, while the majority of non-subscribers despatched a letter of advice to Exeter, which, by virtue of its statement of reasons for non-subscribing, is regarded by unitarians as their charter of dogmatic freedom. The mere momentary controversy concerning these synod proceedings gave birth to more than seventy pamphlets.

It is claimed by presbyterian writers that there was no avowed heterodoxy among the London ministers for half a generation after Salters' hall. This means little more than that the great luminaries of dissent of the era following on the Toleration act had passed away, and that, between 1720 and 1740, no successors had arisen worthy of the memory of those giants—outside, that is to say, of the world of academic teaching. But, underneath the surface deadness and mental lethargy of this later period, the leaven of anti-Trinitarian thought continued incessantly at work, and, when the interim of quiescence had ended, it was found to have been merely a phase of growth, an intermediate stage between the Arianism of 1720 and the later unitarianism. In matter of literature, the intermediate phase was distinguished by the writings of John Taylor of Norwich, a professed presbyterian (*Defence of the Common rights of Christians*, 1737; *The Scripture doctrine of Original Sin*, 1740), and of Samuel Bourn (*Address to Protestant Dissenters*, 1737).

In itself, the literary importance of this period of nonconformist history is not great, save and in so far as it marks the stepping-stone to the latest phase of the development of unitarian thought—that phase, namely, which is distinguished by the names of Nathaniel Lardner, Richard Price, Joseph Priestley and Theophilus Lindsey—a movement which lies outside the scope of the present chapter<sup>1</sup>.

It is not to be supposed that the evolution of a distinctively

<sup>1</sup> As to Price and Priestley cf. chap. xiv, pp. 344—8., *ante*. 6

Unitarian church was the sole outcome of the train of development which has been briefly sketched above. The sections of dissent—in all its three denominations—which stood aloof from the distinctively unitarian development, yet remained profoundly affected by the spirit of it. The presbyterian, independent and baptist churches alike showed, in their loose internal organisations, the disintegrating force of the unitarian movement. Both in individual congregations and in the loose and feeble associations, the spirituality of dissent, which had been its glory and motive force in the seventeenth century, had sunk into atrophy; and, had it not been for the reviving influence of methodism, all three denominations would probably, at the close of the eighteenth century, have offered a melancholy spectacle. The intellectual gain to English thought generally, quite apart from dissenting theology in particular, was incalculable; but the spiritual loss was none the less to be deplored.

In emphasising, however, the free thought side, or effect of the unitarian movement within dissent, it is not to be understood that this was a free thought movement in the sense of twentieth century science or philosophy. The eighteenth century unitarian movement was, in the main, theological, not rationalistic. If any comparison were called for, it should rather be with the spread of Arminianism in the English church in the seventeenth century. Both movements had for their motive springs one impulse, that is to say, a protest against Calvinism, and, when dissent, by means of unitarian thought, had thrown off the fetters of that Calvinism, it remained, on the whole, during the period here surveyed, quiescent and content. And, as a result, when the deistic controversy, a purely rationalistic movement, engaged the English church and English thought in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the leading exponents of dissent, whether orthodox or Arian, are to be found on the conservative side. James Foster, baptist minister of the Barbican chapel, and Nathaniel Lardner, then presbyterian minister in Poor Jewry lane, the accomplished presbyterians William Harris, Joseph Hallett, Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge—all these dissenting writers<sup>1</sup> contributed not less powerfully, if less sensationally and attractively, to the rout of the deists than did Butler and Berkeley themselves.

Finally, outside and apart from the field of pure thought, eighteenth century England owes a heavy debt to dissent for its educational system, to which reference has already been made in

<sup>1</sup> For a list of nonconformist contributions to the deistic controversy, and of works of other nonconformist writers, see bibliography.

an earlier volume<sup>1</sup>, but which seems to deserve further notice here in its connection with the influence of nonconformity upon literature. Although the presbyterians had but one or two free schools (public charity schools) in London before 1714, and, although the baptists and independents joined forces in that and the succeeding year to establish a similar free school at Horsleydown (subsequently the Maze Pond school), the academy system of the dissenters, in the main, had reference only to the private and domestic problem of the supply of educated ministers for their respective denominations. Accordingly, each one of the more widely recognised academies, during some period of its generally chequered and brief career, takes on a denominational colour. As a system, these academies date entirely from the era of the Toleration act. Prior to that date, dissenting ministers engaged in education acted as private tutors in families or contented themselves with opening small private schools in their own houses. After the Toleration act, however, individual ministers started private schools of their own of which it is now impossible to ascertain the number or, in many instances, the circumstances of origin and growth. Where the minister was a man of learning and power, these schools endured for a generation and sometimes longer, and linked their names with the history of dissent through the personality alike of pupils and of tutors. And it is herein that they claim special recognition; for, in their totality, they present a brilliant galaxy of talent in fields of learning far removed from mere theological studies. Such a result could not have been achieved, had it not been for the powerful solvent of intellectual freedom which the unitarian movement brought in its train. Few of the academies, whatever their denominational colour at the outset, escaped contact with it, and those of them which assimilated the influence most freely produced great tutors and scholars. In this matter, the academies trod the same historical path as that followed by the individual dissenting churches. Their intellectual activity blazed so fiercely that it tended to burn up the spiritual life; and herein lies the secret at once of their first success, their chequered and bickering career and, in most cases, their ultimate atrophy.

The attitude of the church of England towards these academies has already been detailed<sup>2</sup>. But the fear which the establishment

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, vol. ix, chap. xv.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, vol. ix, pp. 394—5. A reference might have been added to the later important and illuminating case of the strife between chancellor Reynolds and Philip Doddridge concerning the academy of Northampton.

entertained that these academies would starve the universities proved baseless. In their early days, indeed, they attracted a lay *clientela* as well as candidates for the ministry. But, the bent towards unitarianism which provided the intellectual stimulus to tutors and ministerial candidates frightened off the layman, and effectually prevented the dissenting academies from leaving the deep mark on the English race and on the English educational system that might have been expected from the individual talent and prestige of their tutors<sup>1</sup>.

Whatever the theological basis of the three denominations of which this chapter has mainly treated, there is one general field of literary activity which they cultivated in common—that of hymn-writing and religious poetry. A list of their chief contributors to this branch of literature will be found elsewhere<sup>2</sup>. But, apart from this phase, in so far as the devotional literature of dissent is merely devotional, whether it be 'practical' or 'theological,' it does not enter into the wider subject of English literature as such. All the same, there are certain outstanding products of this portion of the writings of dissent (Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, 1650; Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, 1745) which, by their mere literary, as well as spiritual, quality, challenge a place in the annals of our literature by the side of the masterpieces of Bunyan and Milton. Broadly speaking, however, the course of the history of dissent, from 1660 to 1760, militated against the production of purely devotional literature. The race of giants who had seen the great commonwealth days, and who went out in 1662, were mainly preachers. The succeeding generation, likewise one of giants, was occupied with dogmatic wrangles, practical questions of church organisation, or actual political dealings with the state. From 1720 to 1740, there followed a period of almost unbroken spiritual deadness; and, when this partially came to an end with the advent of Doddridge, the spiritual impress is from without, from methodism, rather than from within, from the inherent spirituality of dissent itself. During this period, therefore, English nonconformity rather looks forward, as anticipating that later general revival of the national religious life which was born of methodism, than backward to that stern spirituality of Calvinistic dissent which had puritanised the great revolution.

<sup>1</sup> For a list of some of the chief of these academies, in the period under survey, see appendix to the present chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See bibliography.

## APPENDIX

### LIST OF NONCONFORMIST ACADEMIES (1680—1776)

Within the period here treated, the following are some of the chief of these academies. The publication in the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*, 1672-3, and in C. L. Turner's *Original Records*, 2 vols., 1911, of the whole series of dissenters' licences, has revealed the astonishing extent to which the ejected ministers applied themselves to the work of teaching. This material still needs to be worked up, and it is obviously impossible to quote the licences here. The following list, therefore, contains only such academies as are referred to in sources other than, or extraneous to, the Entry Book of licences—in other words, in the general sources of the history of dissent. The classification among the three denominations must be taken as very loose and uncertain, except in certain wellknown cases. It need only be added that many of the tutors briefly mentioned here were men of great intellectual power, who had held high academic positions under the commonwealth.

#### *Independent academies*

**Exeter a.** (Opened by Joseph Hallett, sen., who was orthodox. Under his son, who was an avowed Arian, the a. became a nursery of Arianism. It dwindled away after his death and was reopened in 1760 by Micajah Towgood.)

**Moorfields (Tenter alley) a.** (Started by the independent fund, about 1700, under Isaac Chauncey. After 1712, under Dr Ridgeley and John Eames, F.R.S., friend of Sir Isaac Newton, to whom succeeded Dr David Jennings and Dr Morton Savage, 1744.)

**King's Head society a.** (Started in 1732 by the King's Head society, as a protest against the freedom of thought prevailing in the fund a. It was at first under Samuel Parsons, and from 1735 under Abraham Taylor, and then John Hubbard and Zephaniah Marryat; after several changes of place, it settled at Homerton in 1772.)

**Kibworth a.** (Started by John Jennings, 1715-22, with the help of the Coward trustees. This school was continued at Northampton by Philip Doddridge with the help of William Coward, 1729-51. It removed to Daventry, and after 1751 became Arian in tone, under Dr Caleb Ashworth, tutor of Joseph Priestley. Dissolved 1798.)

**Dr David Jennings' private a. in Well Close square.** (After his death in 1762, it changed its theological character under Dr Samuel Morton Savage, Dr Andrew Kippis and Dr Abraham Lees and was moved to Hoxton, becoming Arian. Dissolved 1785, and succeeded by a fresh orthodox a. there.)

**Ottery a.** (Started under John Lavington in 1752 by the joint endeavour of the fund board and the King's Head society.)

- Heckmondwike a.** (Started in 1756, as anti-Socinian in character, by the Education society of the Northern counties—or rather of the West riding of Yorkshire. At first under James Scott, Timothy Priestley (the brother of Dr Joseph Priestley), and Timothy Waldegrave. It is today represented by the Yorkshire United college, Bradford.)
- Warrington a.** (Started in 1757 on the extinction of an a. at Kendal. It was from the outset frankly rationalistic in purpose, being promoted by 'rational' dissenters on their own principles under Dr John Taylor of Norwich. John Seddon of Warrington provided it with a 'rational' liturgy. Among its tutors were Dr J. Aikin, Gilbert Wakefield, Joseph Priestley, and Dr Enfield—all Arians. Priestley himself left in 1767.)
- Bedworth (co. Warwick) a.** (Under Julius Saunders, ?1730-40; who was succeeded by John Kirkpatrick.)
- Saffron Walden a.** (Under John (or Thomas) Payne, 1700 c.)
- Pinner (co. Middlesex) a.** (Under Thomas Goodwin, jun., from 1699. Theophilus Lobb was one of his pupils.)
- Hackney (London) a.** (Under Thomas Rowe, 1681-3, removed to London and then to Jewin street; from 1703 in Ropemakers' alley in Moorfields.)
- Newington Green a.** (Under Theophilus Gale, 1665 to his death in 1678. Succeeded by Thomas Rowe; but closed on his death, 1705, after having been removed to Clapham and again to Little Britain, London. Dr Watts and Josiah Hort were pupils.)
- Wapping a.** (Under Edward Veal, before 1678 to ?1708; closed shortly before his death, having been temporarily broken up in 1681. Nathaniel Taylor, John Shower and Samuel Wesley were among his pupils.)
- Nettlebed (co. Oxford) a.** (Under Thomas Cole, 1662-72. John Locke and Samuel Wesley were his pupils.)

### *Presbyterian academies*

- London: Hoxton square a.** (Its first origin appears to be traceable in the city of Coventry, where Dr John Bryan and Dr Obadiah Grew founded an a. To them succeeded Dr Joshua Oldfield (the friend of Locke). Oldfield, with Mr Tong, transferred it to London. Elsewhere the Hoxton square a. is stated to have been founded by John Spademan, Joshua Oldfield and Lorimer. Spademan was succeeded by Capel: but the a. became extinct after Oldfield's death in 1729.)
- Bridgnorth a.** (Started in 1726 by Fleming, with whom it died. Possibly this was the John Fleming who conducted an a. at Stratford-on-Avon.)
- Highgate a.,** afterwards removed to Clerkenwell. (Under John Kerr or Dr Ker, ?presbyterian).
- Colyton (co. Devon) a.** (Under John Short till 1698; then under Matthew Towgood, till his removal in 1716.)
- Alcester (co. Warwick) a.** (Under Joseph Porter: removed to Stratford-on-Avon under John Alexander, who died 1740 c.)
- Manchester a.** (Opened in 1698, after Henry Newcome's death, under his successor, John Chorlton. Dissolved under his successor, James Coningham.)
- Islington a.** (Under Ralph Button, at Brentford after 1662: from 1672 at Islington. He died in 1680. Sir Joseph Jekyll was a pupil.)
- Coventry a.** (Started 1663 by Dr Obadiah Grew and Dr John Bryan. After Grew's death it was continued by Shewell (d. 1693) and Joshua Oldfield. In 1699, William Tong took over a few of Oldfield's pupils; but on his removal to London, 1702, the a. came to an end.)

**Rathmell (Yorks.) a.** (Under Richard Frankland. Opened at Rathmell, March 1669-70; removed, 1674, to Natland near Kendal; 1683, to Calton in Craven; 1684, to Dawsonfield near Crosthwaite in Westmorland; 1685, to Hartleborough in Lancs.; 1685-6, suspended; 1686-8, reopened at Attercliffe near Sheffield; 1689, at Rathmell. Frankland died in 1698, and his a. was then dissolved. Of his pupils left at his death, some went to John Chorlton at Manchester and some to Timothy Jollie at Attercliffe.)

**Attercliffe a.** (Under Timothy Jollie, 1691, who rented Attercliffe hall and called his a. Christ's college; among his many pupils, was Dr Thomas Secker. J. died in 1714, when he was succeeded by Wadsworth. The a. died out long before W.'s death in 1744.)

**London a.** (Under Dr George Benson, about 1750. Arian.)

**Sheriff Hales (co. Salop) a.** (Under John Woodhouse, 1676; broken up about 1696. In this a. there were many lay students, among them Robert Harley, afterwards earl of Oxford, and Henry St John (afterwards viscount Bolingbroke). Matthew Clarke and Benjamin Robinson were also pupils.)

**Hungerford (co. Berks.) a.** (Under Benjamin Robinson, 1696, having been open, three years earlier, at Findern in Derbyshire as a grammar school only.)

**Islington a.** (Thomas Doolittle: started in 1662 as a boarding-school in Moorfields, Doolittle being assisted by Thomas Vincent; in 1665 removed to Woodford Bridge, Essex; in 1672 removed to Islington; closed under the persecution, 1685-8; reopened 1688, but died out before Doolittle's death in 1707. Edmund Calamy and Thos. Emlyn were his pupils.)

**Oswestry and Shrewsbury a.** (Connected principally with the name of James Owen, 1679 onwards, but actually started by his predecessor, Francis Tallents. After Owen's death continued by Samuel Benion and John Reynolds. Under the latter it was dissolved, before 1718.)

**Taunton a.** (Started by Matthew Warren and others after 1662. After Warren's death, 1706, it was carried on by joint efforts of Stephen James (d. 1725), Robert Darch and Henry Grove (d. 1738). After 1738 Thomas Amory became head of the whole a.; but, under his Arian tendencies, it collapsed before his removal to London in 1759.)

**Gloucester and Tewkesbury a.** (Under Samuel Jones, 1712-20. Archbishop Secker, bishop Butler and Samuel Chandler were students here together. After Jones's death the a. was removed to Carmarthen, and there remained under Thomas Perrot till 1733. Then it was under Vavasor Griffiths at Llwynllwyd (co. Brecknock) till 1741; then at Haverfordwest under Evan Davies; then again at Carmarthen under Samuel Thomas and Dr J. Jenkins. Under Samuel Thomas the independents withdrew and formed a new a. at Abergavenny under David Jardine.)

**Stoke Newington or Newington Green a.** (Under Charles Morton, 1667-85. Defoe, Samuel Wesley and Samuel Palmer were students here. Discouraged by persecution in 1685, Morton went to New England and became vice-president of Harvard. His a. was continued by William Wickens and Stephen Lobb, both of whom died in 1699, and by Thomas Glasscock (d. 1706); but it probably died out not long after 1696.)

**Kendal a.** (Under Dr Caleb Rotherham, 1733-52; possibly as a continuation of the extinct Attercliffe a.)

**Bryllyllywarch (Llangynwyd, co. Glamorgan) a.** (Commonly regarded

as the germ of the Carmarthen Presbyterian college; but this is impossible. Started by Samuel Jones 1672. After his death in 1697, Reger Griffith opened an a. at Abergavenny, which is regarded as a continuation of Brynllwarch. It lasted only three or four years. At Brynllwarch, Rees Price continued either Jones's or Griffith's school but gave up between 1702 and 1704 when the a. was united with a grammar school at Carmarthen started by William Evans, who died 1718. To this school Dr Williams left an annuity. William Evans is considered the founder of the Welsh a. system.)

Stourbridge and Bromsgrove (co. Worcester) a. (Under [? Henry] Hickman, 1665. He was disabled by age, ?1670 c.)

Tubney (Berks.) a. (Under Dr Henry Langley, 1662-72.)

Bridgwater a. (Started by John Moore 1676: became Arian under his son, who died 1747.)

Sulby (co. Northampton) a. (Under John Shuttlewood, about 1678; died 1689.)

Alkington (Whitchurch, co. Salop) a. (Under John Malden, 1668-80.)

Wickham Brook (co. Suffolk) a. (Under Samuel Cradock, from after 1672 to his removal in 1696. Edmund Calamy was one of his pupils.)

Tiverton a. (Under John Moor, 1688 c., or possibly after.)

Shaftesbury (and afterward Semly) (co. Wilts.) a. (Under Matthew Towgood, after 1662. He was the grandfather of Micajah Towgood.)

Besides the above, there are stray references to private schools kept by John Flavel of Dartmouth, [John, son of] Edward Rayner of Lincoln, John Whitlock and Edward Reynolds of Nottingham, Ames Short of Lyme Dorset, Samuel Jones of Llangynydd, John Ball of Honiton.

### *Baptist academies*

In 1702 the General Baptist association resolved to erect a school of universal learning in London, with a view to training for the ministry. It is not known what followed. In 1717 the Particular Baptist fund was started for the support of ministers and for supplying a succession of them.

Trowbridge a. (Opened by John Davison, who died in 1721. His successor was Thomas Lucas, who died in 1740.)

Bristol a. (In its earliest form, founded by several London baptists in 1752 as an education society for assisting students. It was, at first, under Dr Stennett, Dr Gill, Wallin and Brine. Subsequently it was under Bernard Foskett and Hugh Evans; it was taken in hand, in 1770, by the Baptist education society, and firmly established by Dr Caleb Evans. This a. became, subsequently, the Baptist Rawdon college.)

## CHAPTER XVII

### POLITICAL LITERATURE

(1755—75)

THE death of Henry Pelham in 1754 destroyed the equilibrium of English politics. 'Now,' said king George II, regretting, possibly, the minister more than the man, 'Now, I shall have no peace.' And he was right, for the leading whigs entered on an angry struggle for supreme power which only ended when, in 1757, the domination of the elder Pitt was, virtually, established. Round the duke of Newcastle, formidable by his phalanx of obedient votes, Pitt, the man of genius and of the public confidence, and the shrewd, but far from high-minded, Henry Fox arose a dense dust of controversy.

It was not merely the conflict of personal ambitions that was in question. Great public issues were rapidly raised and discussed, if, as rapidly, let fall again. The sober middle class were weary of the prevailing corruption which handed over the country's government to glaring incompetence. Tories, abandoning their vain hopes of a revolution, were eager to loose England from the Hanoverian tether which involved her in the intricacies of German politics, and to have done with the long feud with France. And both parties were anxious to see power held by men more representative than were the members of the existing narrow whig oligarchy, who, on their side, still believed in their hereditary mission to rule. Material for honest discussion there was in plenty.

At first, it seemed as if this kind of discussion would hold the field. In August 1755, *The Monitor* was founded by a London merchant, Richard Beckford, and was edited, and part written, by John Entick, of dictionary fame<sup>1</sup>. Like its predecessors in political journalism, it consisted of a weekly essay on current events and topics: it was all leading article. The maintenance of

<sup>1</sup> His extremely popular *Spelling Dictionary* (1764) was followed by his *Latin and English Dictionary* (1771) and by other useful works.

Whig principles and the uprooting of corruption formed its policy: good information, good sense and a kind of heavy violence of style were its characteristics. Soon, it was supplemented by a series of tory pamphlets, under the title *The Letters to the People of England*, written by John Shebbeare, a physician of some literary celebrity. They were not his first production; he had for some time been eminent in 'misanthropy and literature'; but they were distinguished beyond his other efforts by bringing him to the pillory. His politics, not the scurrility that tinged them, were in fault. He was a virulent tory, and in his *Sixth Letter* held up the reigning dynasty to public scorn. His highest praise is, that he still remains readable. Logical, rhetorical, laboriously plain and, occasionally, cogent, his short paragraphs pretty generally hit the nail—often, no doubt, a visionary nail—on the head. Later, he was to enjoy court favour and be a capable pamphleteer on the side of George III; but his time of notoriety was gone.

Soon, however, the personal conflict asserted itself. In November 1756, Arthur Murphy, the dramatist, started *The Test*, with a view to capturing public favour for Henry Fox. But his amiable prosing and feeble giggle were soon over-crowded by the Pittite *Con-Test*, a far more able, and, also, more scurrilous, print, in some of the better essays of which we detect the pith and point of Shebbeare.

Save the honest *Monitor*, these Grub-street railers vanished with the whig feud which called forth their exertions, and the splendid success of the great commoner's ministry almost succeeded in silencing criticism. It required a new ferment of public opinion, a new conflict of principles and a renewed struggle for the possession of power to reawaken the fires of controversy, which, this time, were not to be quenched. George III's accession and his personal policy gave the signal. The new king was determined to choose his own ministers and break up the band of ruling whigs. The now loyal tories were to share in the government, and the system of king William's time was to be revived. The first literary sign of the change was a rally of pamphleteers for the defence and propagation of the royal views. In 1761, Lord Bath—the William Pulteney who, in the last reign, had led the opposition to Walpole and helped to set on foot *The Craftsman*—published his *Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man*, which contained an able exposition of the whig system and its vices, and outlined the new programme. Others followed, professional writers for the most part, such as the veteran Shebbeare and the elder Philip Francis—in his

*Letter from the Cocoa-Tree*<sup>1</sup> to the Ountry Gentlemen, which was not devoid of skill—and Owen Ruffhead, formerly editor of *The Con-Test*. But, in spite of the real ability displayed by these writers, their frequent ignorance of the true course of events and the lack of good faith habitual to them prevented them from attaining to any real excellence.

Meanwhile, events were moving rapidly. George III had been able to oust Pitt and Newcastle from power and to promote his Scottish favourite, Lord Bute, to the office of prime minister. Bute had seen, from the first, that something beyond sporadic pamphlets was needed for converting public opinion to the new régime, discredited as it was by the dismissal of Pitt. For this, an imitation of *The Monitor* was the only means, a steady drumming of the same views and sentiments into the popular ear. It was all the more necessary, at the moment of Bute's accession to power, to set up a rival weekly journal, since *The Monitor* (in this representing the public) was a bitter opponent of the Scottish minister. Bute, however, cannot be called happy in his choice of means. Eminent literary talent was required, but not any sort of literary talent, and Tobias Smollett, famous as a novelist, was only to earn humiliation as a political controversialist. In vain his sheet, *The Briton*, discharged a weekly broadside of ferocious epithets on the opposition and its journalistic defenders. His persuasive powers were small, and he was fairly distanced in argumentative skill, raillery and vituperation. Arthur Murphy, writer of the dead *Test*, was soon summoned to Smollett's aid with a new paper, *The Auditor*; but, although more bitter than of old, he was not less feeble. The public judgment was only too clear. Neither of the ministerial papers would sell. Of course, Bute's unpopularity was partly at fault; but the scanty merit of the two champions was unable to surmount the weakness of their case.

The publication of *The Briton* provoked the appearance of the only one of these fugitive periodicals which has any reputation, *The North Briton*, edited by John Wilkes. That demagogue, on whom the mob-ruling mantle of Sacheverell descended, was sprung from a middle class family, typical of a respectability alien to the manners of its celebrated scion. He was born in 1727, and was the son of a maltster of Clerkenwell. He received a good education from a presbyterian minister and at the university of Leyden; and, before he was twenty-one, married,

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated tory club described by Gibbon in his letters.

by his father's desire, an heiress much his senior in years. His wife and her mother were dissenters, and he was gallant and gay. Wilkes grew steadily estranged from his home and soon exceedingly dissipated. A separation from his wife was arranged, and he plunged into a course of profligate living in town. He became a member of the Hellfire club, which met at Medmenham abbey and included the most noted rakes of the day. It was in the midst of these wild orgies that he took up politics. In 1755, he obtained a seat in the commons as a member for Aylesbury, where his wife's estate lay. He was a follower of Pitt and hoped for some promotion—the embassy in Constantinople would have been most congenial to him—from his patron. But George III was king, and Bute intervened. His hopes of repairing his shattered fortunes having thus vanished, Wilkes turned to journalism for his revenge upon the favourite, whose incompetence filled him with indignation. After producing a successful pamphlet concerning the breach with Spain, he proceeded to send contributions to *The Monitor*, in which he developed with much ingenuity the history of contemporary foreign favourites, and left his readers to point the obvious moral. Then, on the appearance of *The Briton*, he, in June 1762, started his rival print, *The North Briton*. Week by week, the new periodical continued its attacks on the government. It showed itself bold, to start with, in printing the ministers' names in full, without the usual subterfuges of dashes and stars; and it grew bolder as it went on, and as the odium into which Bute had fallen became more obvious. Nothing, however, gave a handle to the authorities by which, even under the existing law of libel, the writers could be brought to book, although *The Monitor* was subjected to lengthy legal proceedings. At last, Wilkes overstepped the line in No. 45, which bitterly impugned the truthfulness of the speech from the throne regarding the peace of Paris. The long government persecution of the libeller, which followed the publication of No. 45, and which finally resulted in the abolition of the tyrannic system of general warrants, also snuffed out *The North Briton*. The paper was subsequently revived; but it proved only the ghost of its former self. Wilkes, on the other hand, had yet to play the part of a full-fledged demagogue in his contest with king and parliament concerning the Middlesex election of 1768. Triumphant at last, he ended his life in 1797 as chamberlain of London and a *persona grata* with George III. In all his vicissitudes, he had kept in touch with public opinion.

It is not easy to describe the blackguard charm of Wilkes.

Notoriously self-interested and dissolute, ugly and squinting, he enjoyed a popularity by no means confined to the mob. Much may be ascribed to the singular grace of his manners. Even Johnson fell a victim to these. But he, also, possessed some very obvious virtues. He was brave, good-humoured and adroit. He had a sort of selfish kindliness. He was, moreover, manifestly on the right side: few people had any love for general warrants or for the infringement of the liberty of election. And he turned all these advantages to account.

His paper, *The North Briton*, may be regarded as the best example of its kind, the brief periodical pamphlet. It represents the type at which *The Briton* and the rest aimed, but which they could not reach. Like its congeners, it consisted of a weekly political essay. It was directed entirely to the object of overthrowing Bute and of reinstating the old group of whig families in alliance with Pitt. We notice at once in its polemic the scantiness of serious argument. Satire, raillery, scandal and depreciation in every form are there; but a real tangible indictment does not readily emerge from its effusions. In part, this peculiarity was due to the difficulty under which an opposition writer then lay in securing information and in publishing what information he possessed. When the preliminaries of peace or the jobbery of Bute's loan issues gave Wilkes his opportunity, he could be cogent enough. But a more powerful reason lay in the main object of the paper. Bute was safe so long as he was not too unpopular: he had the king's favour and a purchased majority in parliament. Therefore, he had to be rendered of no value to king and parliament. He was to be written down and to become the bugbear of the ordinary voter, while his supporters in the press were to be exposed to derision and thus deprived of influence. Wilkes and his allies in *The North Briton* were well equipped for this task. They were interesting and vivacious from the first, making the most of the suspicions excited by Bute. As the heat of battle grew and their case became stronger, the violence and abusiveness of their expressions increased till it reached the scale of their rivals. Still, even so, they continued to display an apt brutality wanting in the latter. In the earlier numbers, too, *The Briton* and *The Auditor* fell easy victims to the malicious wit of Wilkes. Perhaps the best instance of his fun is the letter which he wrote under a pseudonym to the unsuspecting *Auditor*, descanting on the value of Floridan peat, a mythical product, for mitigating the severity of the climate in the West Indies. An exposure followed in *The North Briton*;

and poor Murphy could only refer to his tormentor afterwards as 'Colonel Cataline.'

But the scheme of *The North Briton* gave an easy opportunity for ironic satire. The editor was supposed to be a Scot exulting over the fortune of his countryman, and very ingenuous in repeating the complaints of the ousted English. There was nothing exquisite in this horseplay; but it was not badly done, and it had the advantage of appealing to strong national prejudice. The antipathy to the Scots, which was to disappear with startling suddenness during the American war of independence, had not yet undergone any sensible diminution. At root, perhaps, it was the dislike of an old-established firm for able interlopers. Scots were beginning to take a leading share in the common government, and their nationality was always unmistakable. Accordingly, old legends of their national character and a purseproud contempt for their national poverty lived obstinately on; and *The North Briton* worked the vein exhaustively.

In the composition of his journal and in his whole campaign against the minister, Wilkes had for his coadjutor a more eminent man, who, unlike himself, is to be conceived of, not as a pleasant adventurer, but as a principal literary figure of the time, the poet and satirist Charles Churchill. The two men were fast friends, although their lives had flowed in very different streams until they became acquainted in 1761. Churchill was the son of a clergyman, who was curate and lecturer of St John's, Westminster, and vicar of Rainham in Essex. The younger Charles was born in 1731 and early distinguished himself by his ability at Westminster school. Thence, he proceeded, in 1748, to St John's college, Cambridge<sup>1</sup>; but his residence there was not for long. With characteristic impulsiveness, when only 18 years of age, he contracted a marriage in the Fleet with a girl named Martha Scott, and his university education had to be discontinued. His kindly father took the young couple into his house and had his son trained, as best he might, for holy orders. In 1754, Churchill was ordained deacon and licensed curate of South Cadbury in Somerset, whence, as priest, he removed, in 1756, to act as his father's curate at Rainham. Two years later, the father died, and the son was elected to succeed him as incumbent of St John's in Westminster, where he increased his income by teaching in a girls' school.

<sup>1</sup> See *Admissions to the College of St John the Evangelist*, pt. II, ed. Scott, R. F., p. 580.

Such is the outline of Churchill's earlier life—bald enough, if stripped of the malicious inventions which gathered round it. His later career is full of evidence both of his good and of his bad qualities. Burdened with two children and an extravagant wife, himself completely unsuited for his clerical profession and inclined to the pleasures of the town, in two years he became bankrupt, and owed the acceptance by his creditors of a composition to the generosity of his old schoolmaster, Pierson Lloyd. Afterwards, Churchill was to show his natural honesty and good feeling, not only by a constant friendship to his benefactor's son, Robert Lloyd, a poet of secondary rank, but, also, by paying his own debts in full, in disregard of his bankruptcy. That he was able to do this was due to his own new profession of poetry. He began, unluckily, with a Hudibrastic poem, *The Bard*, in 1760, which could not find a publisher. His second effort, *The Conclave*, contained matter against the dean and chapter of Westminster so libellous that the intending publisher dared not bring it out. A more interesting subject of satire presented itself in the contemporary stage, and, in March 1761, there appeared, at the author's own risk, *The Rosciad*. Its success was immediate and extraordinary; Churchill was enabled to pay his debts, to make an allowance to his wife, from whom he had now been for some time estranged, and to set up in glaringly unclerical attire as a man about town. But the penalty, too, for indulging in bitter criticism—a penalty, perhaps, welcome to the combative poet—was not long in coming; and, for the rest of his life, he was involved in an acrid literary warfare. Yet, in these tedious campaigns he was a constant victor. Few escaped unbruised from the cudgel of his verse, and, vulnerable though his private life made him to attack, the toughness of his fibre enabled him to endure.

In consequence of this literary celebrity, Churchill made the acquaintance of Wilkes, whose friendship was responsible for the turn his life took in his few remaining years. The last shred of the poet's respectability was soon lost in the Medmenham orgies; yet, his political satires, which, unlike those of his friend Wilkes, do not admit doubt of their sincerity, gave him a permanent place in English literature. Quite half of *The North Briton* was written by him; his keenest satiric poem was *The Prophecy of Famine*, which, in January 1763, raised the ridicule of Bute and his countrymen to its greatest height. Thanks to Wilkes's adroitness, Churchill escaped the meshes of the general warrant, and was afterwards let alone by government: he had not written No. 45. But he ceased to reside permanently in London. We hear of him in Wales in

1763, and, later, he lived at Richmond and on Acton common. The stream of his satires, political and social, continued unabated throughout. His days, however, were numbered. He died at Boulogne, on 4 November 1764, while on his way to visit Wilkes at Paris, and was buried at Dover.

'Life to the last enjoyed, here Churchill lies.' This line of his own was placed on his gravestone, and not inaccurately sums up the man. The burly poet's faults are too manifest to need insisting upon. It is pleasanter to remember that, as already stated, he supported his brother rake, Robert Lloyd, when the unlucky man was dying beggared in the Fleet. His devotion to Wilkes, like the rest of him, was unbounded and whole-hearted. Nor is any mean action recorded of him.

There is no denying that his verse is truculent and loud. What most distinguishes it from contemporary couplets is its spirit and strength. He may ramble, he may prose; but he never exhibits the neat, solemn tripping which tires us in his contemporaries. *The Rosciad*, with which he first won reputation, consists chiefly of a series of severe sketches of the leading actors in 1761. Few, save Garrick, escape unblamed; but the poet, although censorious, can hardly be called unfair. His verse maintains a steady level of force and skill, just within the bounds of poetry, lighted up, now and then, by such shrewd couplets as:

Appearances to save his only care;  
So things seem right, no matter what they are;

and, occasionally, phrases of stinging wit intensify the ridicule.

*The Rosciad* called forth many enemies, and, in reply to an attack in *The Critical Review*, Churchill published *The Apology*, under the impression that the critique was Smollett's. It cannot be called an advance on its forerunner, although sufficiently tart to make Garrick, who was victimised in it, almost supplicate his critic's friendship. As a poem, it is much surpassed by Churchill's next composition, *Night*, which appeared in October 1761. The versification has become easier, the lines more pliant, without losing vigour. There is a suggestion of a poetical atmosphere not to be found in the hard, dry outlines of his earlier work. The substance is slight; it is merely a defence of late hours and genial converse over 'the grateful cup.' Churchill was, in this instance at all events, too wise to defend excess.

A year's rest given to the prose of *The North Briton* seems to have invigorated Churchill for the production of his

best satire, *The Prophecy of Famine*. Its main object was to decry and ridicule Bute and the Scots, although there is an undercurrent of deserved mockery at the reigning fashion of pastoral. Churchill, as he owns, was himself half a Scot<sup>1</sup>; but the circumstance did not mitigate his national and perfectly sincere prejudice against his northern kinsfolk. The probable reason was that Bute was Wilkes's enemy, and the warm-hearted poet was wroth, too, in a fascinated sympathy with his friend. The wit and humour of the piece are in Churchill's most forcible and amusing vein. His hand is heavy, it is true; more dreary irony was never written; and he belabours his theme like a peasant wielding a flail; but the eighteenth century must have found him all the more refreshing. Compare him with the prose polemics of his day, and he is not specially venomous. He only repeats in sinewy verse the current topics of reproach against the Scots.

The painter Hogarth now crossed Churchill's path. A satiric print of Wilkes by Hogarth roused the poet's vicarious revenge. The savage piece of invective, *The Epistle to William Hogarth*, was the result, which, if it has not worn so well as Hogarth's pictures, yet, here and there, strikes a deeper note than is usual with its author. Take, for instance, the couplet:

With curious art the brain, too finely wrought,  
Preys on herself, and is destroy'd by thought;

although his own fertility shows no sign of exhausting the soil. He was beginning, however, in his own metaphor, to vary the crop. *The Duellist*, published in January 1764, was written, not in the stock heroic couplet, but in octosyllabics suggestive of *Hudibras*. This was an attack on Samuel Martin, one of Wilkes's ministerial enemies, with a few satirical excursions like that on Warburton. The adoption of a new metre was not a success; its straggling movement doubled the risk which Churchill always ran of being tedious, and the extravagance of his vituperation is no antidote. In compensation, the poem contains some of his finest lines. The curse on Martin reveals an old and clearsighted pupil in the school of life:

Grant him what here he most requires,  
And damn him with his own desires!

while the malicious criticism of Warburton's defence of Scripture suggests a literary experience which approves itself to the instincts of human nature:

So long he wrote, and long about it,  
That e'en believers 'gan to doubt it.

<sup>1</sup> *The Prophecy of Famine*, ll. 221—2.

Contemporaneously with *The Duellist*, Churchill was writing, in the heroic couplet, *Gotham*, a curious farrago, in the three books of which a Utopian realm ruled by himself, a long denunciation of the Stewart dynasty and a description of an ideal king jostle one another. He does not appear at his best in this attempt at non-satiric poetry. The usual mannerisms of eighteenth-century poetry, the personifications, the platitudinous moralising, the hackneyed, meaningless descriptions are all to be found here. That entire absence of any taste for nature outside Fleet street which was characteristic of Churchill as fully as it was of Johnson places him at peculiar disadvantage when he imitates Spenser in a hasty catalogue of flowers, trees, months and other poetic properties. Not less did the straightforward vigour of his usual metre and style disqualify him for the prophet of the ideal. In short, in spite of Cowper's praise, he was off his track.

Only a few months before *Gotham* was printed, Churchill had published a very different poem, *The Conference*. He was accused of merely making his profit out of political satire, and he here, in words of obvious sincerity, repudiates the charge that he was looking for office or pension. At the same time, he refers to a better-grounded cause of censure—his seduction of a girl, whose father is said to have been a stone-cutter of Westminster. Instead of pleading extenuating circumstances, such as, in this case, certainly existed, he only confesses his fault and avows his remorse. On the other hand, his personal conduct throughout this miserable affair must be described as callous.

The rest of Churchill's poems are of less interest. *The Author* is a slashing attack on Smollett and other ministerial publicists and agents. *The Ghost*, in octosyllabics, derives its only interest from being, in part, his earliest work; it is tedious and rambling to a degree. We may allow *The Candidate*, directed against Lord Sandwich, to have deserved its share of praise for the defeat of 'Jemmy Twitcher' as he was nicknamed, in the election for the high stewardship of Cambridge university; but its appeal was merely temporary. There is little to remark on any of the other poems—*The Farewell*, *Independence* and *The Journey*—produced by the prolific poet in 1764. They showed an increasing metrical skill, and maintained his reputation, but they did not add to it. *The Times*, which, from its greater fire, might have taken high

<sup>1</sup> 'That Jemmy Twitcher should peach, I own surprises me.' Sandwich, the complete rake of the day, had brought Wilkes's obscene *Essay on Woman* before the House of Lords & a speech of extraordinary hypocrisy.

place among his works, was, unfortunately, both hideous in subject and extravagantly exaggerated in execution.

We find, in fact, that Churchill's talent remained almost stationary during the four years of his poetic industry. Crab-apples, according to Johnson, he produced from the first; and such his fruits remained to the end. He never shows the greater qualities of either of his two chief English predecessors in satire—either those of Pope whom he underrated, or those of Dryden whom he admired. His wit, though strong, is never exquisite. His characters are vividly and trenchantly described; but they do not live to our imagination. His good sense cannot be said to rise to wisdom; and he is deficient in constructive skill. *The Prophecy of Famine* is, after all, an ill-proportioned mixture of satiric epistle and satiric eclogue; while his other satires have little unity except what is provided by the main object of their attack. Although he justly ridicules some of the current phrases of contemporary lesser poetry, he cannot be said himself to rise superior to eighteenth-century conventions. His incessant personifications, 'Gay Description,' 'Dull Propriety,' are, in the end, wearisome; and many of his humorous couplets, constructed after the fashion of the time, rather seem like epigrams than are such. His real *forte* consisted in a steady pommelling of his adversary; with all his fierceness and prejudice, acidity and spite were foreign to his nature.

As a metrist, Churchill can claim some originality. He uses the heroic couplet of the day with fresh freedom and effectivity. At first, in *The Rosciad*, he can hardly be said to form his paired lines into periods. Then, in *The Epistle to William Hogarth*, the last line of his paragraph has a closing sound and really ends a period. Perhaps, it was his long involved sentences, compiled of many clauses, which led him, in later pieces, to a further change. From time to time, he uses *enjambement*, and even, by means of it, breaks up his couplets<sup>1</sup>.

Churchill so overtops his rivals in political verse that they scarcely seem worth mentioning. Mason, his frequent butt as a writer of pastorals—'Let them with Mason bleat and bray and coo'—shrouded himself in political satire under the name Malcolm Macgregor<sup>2</sup>. Falconer, a naval officer, attacked Pitt from the court point of view<sup>3</sup>. But both of these, and even

<sup>1</sup> Cf., for the effect gained by this occasional variation, *Independence*, ll. 199—206.

<sup>2</sup> As to Mason, cf. *ante*, chap. vi.

<sup>3</sup> As to Falconer, cf. *ante*, chap. vii.

Chatterton in his *Consuliad*<sup>1</sup>, merely illustrate their inferiority to Churchill. .

Prose was far more effective than verse in the political controversies which followed Bute's resignation. The weekly essay, in its old form, died out gradually; but the flood of pamphlets continued. They were in a more serious vein than formerly. Measures rather than men were in dispute, not so much because the public taste had changed, as because the more prominent politicians, with the exception of Pitt, presented few points of interest. The ability of many of these numerous pamphlets is undeniable. Some leading statesmen had a share in them. We find such men as George Grenville, an ex-prime minister, and Charles Townshend, leader of the House of Commons, defending or attacking current policy in this fashion. Others were written by authors of literary eminence. Edmund Burke published a celebrated tract in defence of the first Rockingham ministry<sup>2</sup>; Horace Walpole was stirred to address the public concerning the dismissal of general Conway in 1764; latest of all, Johnson took part as a champion of the government during the agitation about the Middlesex election, and in opposition to the accusations of Junius. Perhaps, however, the more effective among these pamphlets were due to political understrappers. Charles Lloyd, Grenville's secretary, wrote a series in support of his patron's policy, including a clever reply to Burke. Thomas Whateley, secretary to the treasury, defended the same minister's finance. These and their fellows worked with more or less knowledge of the ground, and, if their special pleading be conspicuous, they also dispensed much sound information.

Two pamphlets, which appeared in 1764, and dealt with the constitutional questions raised by the prosecution of Wilkes, stand well above their fellows in ability and influence. The first appeared, originally, as *A Letter to The Public Advertiser*, and was signed 'Candor.' It was an attack on Lord Mansfield for his charge to the jury in the Wilkes case and on the practice of general warrants. With a mocking irony, now pleasant, now scathing, the author works up his case, suiting the pretended moderation of his language to the real moderation of his reasoning. The same writer, we cannot doubt, under the new pseudonym 'The Father of Candor,' put a practical conclusion to the legal controversy in his *Letter concerning Libels, Warrants, etc.*, published in the same

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ante*, chap. x.

<sup>2</sup> *Short Account of a Short Administration*, 1766. (See bibliography.)

year. This masterly pamphlet attracted general admiration, and its cool and lucid reasoning, varied by an occasional ironic humour, did not meet with any reply. Walpole called it 'the only tract that ever made me understand law.' The author remains undiscovered. The publisher, Almon, who must have known the secret, declared that 'a learned and respectable Master in Chancery' had a hand in it<sup>1</sup>. Candor's handwriting has been pronounced that of Sir Philip Francis<sup>2</sup>; but, clearly, in view of Almon's evidence, he can only have been part author; and the placid, suave humour of the pamphlets reads most unlike him, and, we may add, most unlike Junius.

Candor's first letter had originally appeared in *The Public Advertiser*, and there formed one of a whole class of political compositions, which, in the next few years, were to take the foremost place in controversy. Their existence was due to the shrewd enterprise of the printer Henry Sampson Woodfall, who had edited *The Public Advertiser* since 1758. In addition to trustworthy news of events at home and abroad, Woodfall opened his columns to correspondence, the greater part of which was political. He was scrupulously impartial in his choice from his letter-bag. Merit and immunity from the law of libel were the only conditions exacted. Soon, he had several journals, such as *The Gazetteer*, competing with his for correspondents; but *The Public Advertiser's* larger circulation, and the inclusion in it of letters from all sides in politics, enabled it easily to distance the rival prints in the quality and quantity of these volunteer contributions. George III himself was a regular subscriber; it gave him useful clues to public opinion. The political letters are of all kinds—denunciatory, humorous, defensive, solemn, matter-of-fact, rhetorical and ribald. Their authors, too, were most varied, and are now exceedingly hard to identify. Every now and then a statesman who had been attacked would vindicate himself under a pseudonym; more frequently, some hanger-on would write on his behalf, with many professions of being an impartial onlooker. There were independent contributors; and small groups of minor politicians

<sup>1</sup> *Anecdotes of Eminent Persons*, vol. 1, pp. 79, 80. Almon's words obviously imply that the master in chancery was still living in 1797. He wrote again, in 1770, both anonymously and under the name Phileleutherus Anglicanus (*Grenville Correspondence*, vol. III, pp. cxxxvi sqq., where the resemblance in manner to the Candor pamphlets is made obvious by extracts).

<sup>2</sup> Parkes, *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis*, vol. 1, pp. 74—81 and 99—101. A facsimile of Candor's handwriting is given in vol. II, plate 5.

would carry on a continuous correspondence for years. But neither single authors nor groups can be easily traced through their compositions. As is natural, their style seldom helps us to identify them. They wrote the current controversial prose, and, after 1770, their prose is tinged with a Junian dye. The pseudonyms throw little light on the matter. There was no monopoly in any one of them, and the same author would vary his pseudonyms as much as possible, chiefly with intent to avoid discovery and the decrease of credit which his communications might undergo if he were known, but, also, to provide sham opponents as a foil to his arguments and to create an illusion of wide public support for his views.

A good instance of the letter-writers was James Scott, a preacher of repute. In 1766, he contributed a series of letters to *The Public Advertiser*, signed 'Anti-Sejanus.' They were written in the interests of Lord Sandwich, and assailed, with much vehemence, the supposed secret intrigues of Bute. Scott used many other pseudonyms, and wrote so well that his later letters, which show Junius's influence in their style, were republished separately. From a private letter written by him to Woodfall<sup>1</sup>, we learn that he, too, was a member of a group who worked together. Another writer we can identify was John Horne, later known as John Horne Tooke and as the author of *The Diversions of Purley*. He began to send in correspondence to the newspapers about 1764; but his celebrity only began when he became an enthusiastic partisan of Wilkes in 1768. Under the pseudonym 'Another Freeholder of Surrey,' he made a damaging attack on George Onslow<sup>2</sup>, and, on being challenged, allowed the publication of his name. The legal prosecution which followed the acknowledgment of his identity, in the end, came to nothing, and Horne was able to continue his career as Wilkes's chief lieutenant. But the cool unscrupulousness with which Wilkes used the agitation as a mere instrument for paying off his own debts and gratifying his own ambitions disgusted even so warm a supporter as Horne. A quarrel broke out between them in 1771 concerning the disposal of the funds raised to pay Wilkes's debts by the society, The Supporters of the Bill of Rights, to which both belonged. Letter after letter from the two former friends

<sup>1</sup> Parkes, *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis*, vol. 1, pp. 180—1. Parkes, as usual with him in the case of the abler letters previous to 1769, attributes 'Anti-Sejanus' to Sir P. Francis. 'Anti-Sejanus' should probably be distinguished from 'Anti-Sejanus junior,' in 1767, who is likely to be Junius.

<sup>2</sup> Celebrated as the single member of the House of Commons who 'said that No. 45 was not a libel.'

appeared in *The Public Advertiser*. Horne, who, perhaps, had the better case, allowed himself to be drawn off into long petty recriminations on Wilkes's private life. Indiscreet expressions of his own were brought up against him, and the popularity of Wilkes, in any case, made the attempt to undermine him impossible. Yet 'parson Horne' had his triumph, too. The redoubtable Junius entered the controversy on Wilkes's side; Horne retorted vigorously, and proved the most successful critic of the greater libeller's productions. In truth, Junius's letters owed much of their success to his victims' inability to rebut his insinuations by giving the real facts in transactions which were necessarily secret. Horne's record was clear; he had no dignity to lose; he could pin Junius down by a demand for proof. Yet, even allowing for these advantages, his skill in dissecting his adversary's statements and his courage in defying the most formidable libeller of the day are much to his credit as a pamphleteer. Before long, Junius was glad to beat a retreat.

It was in the autumn of 1768 that the political letters of the unknown writer who, later, took the pseudonym of Junius, gained the public ear. But we know from his own statement<sup>1</sup> that, for two years before that date, he had been busy in furtive, assassinating polemic; and it is possible that a careful search of newspaper files would result in the discovery of some of his earlier performances of 1766 and 1767. The time when he appears to have begun letter-writing tallies well with the objects pursued by him during the period of his known writings. He was an old-fashioned whig, and a warm, almost an impassioned, adherent of the former prime minister, George Grenville. Thus, the accession to power, in July 1766, of the elder Pitt, now Lord Chatham, with his satellite, the duke of Grafton, after a breach with Lord Temple, Grenville's brother, and their adherents, most likely, gave the impulse to Junius's activity. It was not, however, till October 1768 that he became clearly distinguishable from other writers in *The Public Advertiser*. By that time, Chatham's nervous prostration had rendered him incapable of transacting business, and the duke of Grafton was acting as prime minister in an administration which had become mainly tory. For some reason or other, Junius nursed a vindictive and unassuageable hatred against the duke, which it seems difficult to attribute only to the rancour of a partisan. The weakness of the loosely constructed ministry, too, would tempt their adversary to complete their rout by a

<sup>1</sup> *Grenville Correspondence*, vol. iv, p. 380.

storm of journalistic shot and shell. So, Junius, sometimes under his most constant and, perhaps, original signature 'C.', sometimes under other disguises, continued to add to the fury and cruel dexterity of his attacks. 'The Grand Council' ridiculed the ministers' Irish policy and their methods of business. A legal job which was attempted at the duke of Portland's expense furnished another opportunity. Nor was Junius content with these public efforts to discredit his foes. In January 1768, he sent Chatham an unsigned letter, full of flatteries for the sick man and of suggestions of disloyalty on the part of his colleagues. For the time being, however, Chatham continued to lend his name to the distracted ministry, which staggered on from one mistake to another. Those on which Junius, under his various *aliases*, seized for animadversion were small matters; but they were damaging, and his full knowledge of them, secret as they sometimes were, gave weight to his arguments. His ability seemed to rise with the occasion: the 'prentice hand which may have penned 'Poplicola's' attacks on Chatham in 1767 had become a master of cutting irony and merciless insinuation, when, as 'Lucius,' he, in 1768, flayed Lord Hillsborough. The time was ripe for his appearance as something better than a skirmisher under fleeting pseudonyms, and the series of the letters of Junius proper began in January 1769. They never, however, lost the stamp of their origin. To the last, Junius is a light-armed auxiliary, first of the Grenville connection, then, on George Grenville's death in 1770, of the opponents of the king's tory-minded ministry under Lord North. He darts from one point of vantage to another. Now one, now another, minister is his victim, either when guilty or when unable to defend himself efficiently. Ringing invective, a deadly catalogue of innuendoes, barbed epigrams closing a scornful period, a mastery of verbal fencing and, here and there, a fund of political good sense, all were used by the libeller, and contributed to make him the terror of his victims. The choice and the succession of the subjects of his letters were by no means haphazard. His first letter was an indictment of the more prominent members of the administration. It created a diversion which made the letter-writer's fortune, for Sir William Draper, conqueror of Manilla, rushed into print to defend an old friend, Lord Granby. Thoroughly trounced, ridiculed, humiliated and slandered, he drew general attention to his adversary, who then proceeded to the execution of his main design. In six letters, under his customary signature or the obvious alternative

Philo-Junius, he assailed the duke of Grafton's career as man and minister. Meanwhile, the agitation provoked by Wilkes's repeated expulsion from the commons, and his repeated election for Middlesex, was growing furious; and, in July 1769, Junius, following the lead of George Grenville, took up the demagogue's cause. For two months, in some of his most skilful compositions, he urged the constituency's right to elect Wilkes. Then, as the theme wore out, he chose a new victim. Grafton's administration depended on his alliance with the duke of Bedford, one of the most unpopular men in England. Junius turned on his foe's ally with a malignity only second to that which he displayed against Grafton himself. A triumphant tone begins to characterise the letters, for it was obvious that the Grafton ministry was tottering to its fall; and Junius decided on a bolder step. His information was of the best, and he was convinced that the king had no intention of changing his ministerial policy, even if Grafton resigned. The king, then, must be terrorised into submitting to a new consolidated whig administration. The 'capital and, I hope, final piece,' as it was called by Junius, who was conscious of his own influence with the public though he much overrated it, was an address to the king which contained a fierce indictment of George III's public action since his accession. It was an attempt to raise popular excitement to a pitch which would compel George to yield. But the libeller placed too much trust in his power over the ruling oligarchy and gave too little credit to the dauntless courage and resolution of the king. Lord North took up the vacant post of prime minister; and his talent and winning personality, assisted by the all-prevailing corruption and by the very violence of the opposition in which Junius took part, carried the day. It was the House of Commons which kept Lord North in power, and to its conquest the angry opposition turned. Junius now appears as one of the foremost controversialists on Wilkes's election, and as champion of the nascent radical party forming under Wilkes's leadership in the city of London. Other matters, also, were subjects of his letters, such as the dispute with Spain concerning the Falkland islands, and the judicial decisions of Lord Mansfield; but they are all subordinate to his main end. Ever and anon, too, he returns, now with little public justification, to the wreaking of his inexplicable hatred on the duke of Grafton, 'the pillow upon which I am determined to rest all my resentments.' But the game was up. Clearly, neither king nor commons could be coerced by an outside agitation, which, after all, was of no great extent. The quarrel of

Wilkes and Horne wrecked the opposition in the city. Junius saw his scale kick the beam, and it was only the too true report conveyed by Garrick to the court, in November 1771, that he would write no more, which induced him to pen his final attack on Lord Mansfield, with which the collected letters close.

Junius vanishes with the publication of the collected edition of his letters. It was far from complete. Not only are the letters previous to 1769 omitted, but many of inferior quality or of transient interest, written during the continuance of the great series, usually under other pseudonyms, are absent. And, more remarkable still, there are certain letters of 1772, after the Junian series had closed, which he very anxiously desired not to be known as his, and which passed unidentified for years. Under fresh pseudonyms, such as 'Veteran,' he poured forth furious abuse on Lord Barrington, secretary at war. The cause, in itself, was strangely slight. It was only the appointment of a new deputy secretary, formerly a broker, Anthony Chamier, and the resignations of the preceding deputy, Christopher D'Oyly, and of the first clerk, Philip Francis. But, trifling as the occasion might be, it was sufficient to make the cold and haughty Junius mouth with rage.

Junius follows the habit of his fellow-correspondents in dealing very little with strictly political subjects. Personal recrimination is the chief aim of his letters, and it would hardly be fair to contrast them with those of a different class of authors, such as Burke, or even with the product of the acute legal mind of Candor. Yet, when he treats of political principles he does so with shrewdness and insight. He understood the plain-going whig doctrine he preached, and expounded it, on occasion, with matchless clearness. What could be better as a statement than the sentences in the dedication of the collected letters which point out that the liberty of the press is the guarantee of political freedom and emphasise the responsibility of parliament? And the same strong common sense marks an apophthegm like that on the duke of Grafton—

Injuries may be atoned for and forgiven; but insults admit of no compensation. They degrade the mind in its own esteem, and force it to recover its level by revenge.

Yet these sentences betray in their sinister close the cast of Junius's mind. There is an evil taint in his strength, which could not find satisfaction in impartial reasoning on political questions. This partisanship merges at once into personal hatred, and his rancour against his chief victim, Grafton, can hardly be accounted

for on merely political grounds. His object is to wound and ruin,<sup>1</sup> not only to overthrow. Scandal, true or false, is the weapon of his choice. 'The great boar of the forest,' as Burke called him, loved the poison in which he dipped his tusks, and took a cruel pleasure in the torture he inflicted. Secure in his anonymity, no insult or counter-thrust could reach him. With frigid glee, he retorts upon accusations, which, of necessity, were vague and wide, by plausible insinuations against his opponents. 'To him that knows his company,' said Dr Johnson, 'it is not hard to be sarcastic in a mask.' And Junius, thus gripped with the obvious realities of his position, found no reply to this sarcasm.

But, however much he owed to his concealment and to his remarkable knowledge of the vulnerable points of his quarry (and, be it added, to the cunning with which he selected for his attack men who could not produce their defence), Junius holds a high position on his own literary merits. He was the most perfect wielder of slanderous polemic that had ever arisen in English political controversy. Not lack of rivals, but eminent ability, made him supreme in that ignoble competition. In invective which is uninformed by any generosity of feeling he stands unequalled. His sentences, brief, pithy and pungent, exhibit a delicate equilibrium in their structure. Short as they are, their rhythm goes to form the march of a period, and the cat-like grace of their evolution ends in the sudden, maiming wit of a malign epigram. Direct invective, lucid irony, dry sarcasm mingle with one another in the smooth-ranked phrases. A passage on George III and Grafton will show to what excellence Junius can rise:

There is surely something singularly benevolent in the character of our sovereign. From the moment he ascended the throne there is no crime of which human nature is capable (and I call upon the recorder<sup>1</sup> to witness it) that has not appeared venial in his sight. With any other prince, the shameful desertion of him in the midst of that distress, which you alone had created, in the very crisis of danger, when he fancied he saw the throne already surrounded by men of virtue and abilities, would have outweighed the memory of your former services. But his Majesty is full of justice, and understands the doctrine of 'compensations'; he remembers with gratitude how soon you had accommodated your morals to the necessities of his service; how cheerfully you had abandoned the engagements of private friendship, and renounced the most solemn professions to the public. The sacrifice of Lord Chatham was not lost upon him. Even the cowardice and perfidy of deserting him may have done you no disservice in his esteem. The instance was painful, but the principle might please.

Junius possessed to perfection the art of climax.

<sup>1</sup> Jas. Eyre, later chief justice, in whose court there had lately been condemned for murder two or three persons, who received the royal pardon.

\* The anonymity which he marvellously preserved enabled Junius to maintain that affectation of superiority which distinguished him. Never before were mere scandals and libellous diatribes presented with such an air of haughty integrity and stern contempt for the baseness of jacks-in-office. We have to make an effort in order to remember that this lofty gentleman, above the temptation of 'a common bribe,' is really engaged in the baser methods of controversy, and cuts a poor figure beside Johnson and Burke. But, from his impersonal vantage ground, he could deliver his judgments with more authority and more freely display the deliberate artifice of his style. Its general construction will appear from the passage on Grafton which has been quoted above. But he also uses a more shrouded form of innuendo than he there employs. He was very ingenious in composing a sentence, or even a whole period, of double meaning, and in making his real intent peculiarly clear withal. Perfect lucidity, indeed, is one of his chief literary qualities. In his most artificial rhetoric, his meaning is obvious to any reader. His wit, too, is of high quality, in spite of his laboured antitheses. It has outlived the obsolete fashion of its dress. It far transcends any trick of words; as often as not, it depends on a heartless sense of comedy. 'I should,' he wrote to the unhappy Sir William Draper, 'justly be suspected of acting upon motives of more than common enmity to Lord Granby, if I continued to give you fresh materials or occasion for writing in his defence.' He needs, we feel, defence himself. The best apology, perhaps, that can be offered for him is that he was carrying on an evil tradition and has to be condemned chiefly because of his excellence in a common mode.

Something, too, of his celebrity is due to the mystery he successfully maintained. The wildest guesses as to his identity were made in his own day and after. It was thought at first that only Burke could write so well, and most of the eminent contemporaries of Junius have, at one time or another, been charged with the authorship of the letters. Fresh light was cast on the problem by the publication, in 1812, of his private letters to Woodfall, with specimens of his handwriting, and subsequent research has at least laid down some of the conditions which must be satisfied if his identity is to be proved. Among them, we may take it that a coincidence of the real life of the author with the hints regarding himself thrown out in the letters is not to be expected. It was part of Junius's plan to avoid giving any real clue, and he was anxious to be thought personally important. But there are more certain

data to go upon. The very marked handwriting of Junius is well known, although, to all seeming, it is a feigned hand. The dates of the letters show when the author must have been in London. His special knowledge is of importance. He had an inner acquaintance with the offices of secretary at war and secretary of state, and he was very well informed on much of the doings of contemporary statesmen and on the court. His politics show him to have been an adherent of George Grenville, who was anxious to draw Lord Chatham into alliance with the thoroughgoing whigs, and turn out the king's chosen ministers. The latter he hated to a man; but he had a singular antipathy to Grafton and Barrington<sup>1</sup>. His power of hating is characteristic. We must find a man proud and malignant, yet possessed of considerable public spirit and of a desire for an honest, patriotic administration. Finally, we require a proof of ability, in 1770, to write the letters with their merits and defects. Later writings, even when tinged with the admired Junian style, are but poor evidence. Nor is the inferior quality of a man's later productions an absolute bar to his claims. He may have passed his prime.

Perhaps it is not too bold to say that the only claimant who fulfils the majority of these conditions is Sir Philip Francis. In his case, also, there are corroborative circumstances of weight; and, although, with our present knowledge, we cannot definitely state that he was the author of the letters, yet it is pretty clear that he was concerned in their production. Sir Philip was an Irishman, the son of that elder Philip Francis who was also a pamphleteer. He was born in Dublin on 22 October 1740, but was bred in England at St Paul's school. In 1756, he obtained a clerkship in the secretary of state's office, and accompanied Lord Kinnoul on his embassy to Portugal in 1760. From 1762 to 1772, he held the post of first clerk at the war office, which he resigned in obscure circumstances only to be appointed a member of the governor-general's council in India next year. His long feud there with Hastings brought him into public notice, and, after his return to England in 1781, he became the relentless engineer of the prosecution of his enemy. Failure, however, alike attended these efforts and his hopes of political office. He gave up, in 1807, the seat in parliament which he had held from 1784. He survived to see the claim put forward that he was the author of Junius; but he died, without either admitting or denying the fact, on 23 December

<sup>1</sup> 'Next to the Duke of Grafton, I verily believe that the blackest heart in the kingdom belongs to Lord Barrington.' Junius to Woodfall, Letter, 61.

- 1818. He had married twice and left descendants by his first wife.

Though this career was not humdrum, yet the earlier part of it by no means corresponded with the fancied importance of Junius, and John Taylor, who declared for Francis's authorship in 1814, showed an adventurous spirit in his thesis. Nevertheless, the arguments he collected then, and those since added by his adherents, form a strong array. The all-important handwriting has been assigned to Francis by expert evidence; four or five Junian seals were used by him, and, since Francis's undisguised hand appears in a dating on the Junian proofs along with the feigned, while the feigned hand directs the envelope of a copy of verses dated 1771 and shown, by absolutely independent evidence<sup>1</sup>, to be of Francis's composition, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that Francis was Junius's collaborator, if not Junius himself. The same result is obtained from the facts that Junius used, and vouched for, a report made by Francis of one of Chatham's speeches in December 1770, and that an unacknowledged Junian letter signed 'Phalaris' can hardly have been written without Francis's cooperation, employing, as it does, Francis's very words in a letter to Chatham<sup>2</sup>. Again, Francis's presence in London tallies remarkably with the dates of the letters<sup>3</sup>. When he is absent, Junius is silent. In less external matters, Francis had that experience of the offices of war and state which is marked in Junius. His politics were identical with those of the libeller, and he was at the time engaged as a jackal of the declining politician Calcraft, in the labour of effecting a junction of Chatham and the Grenvilles. Calcraft and Lord Temple, the latter a veteran patron of libellers, may well have given him court intelligence not otherwise obtainable. Calcraft, again, at the time of his death in 1772, was, obviously, under great obligations to Francis for services rendered: he leaves him a legacy and prescribes his nomination to a pocket-borough of his own. If Junius's remorseless hatred of the duke of Grafton

<sup>1</sup> The verses, copied out by Francis's cousin, Tilghman, and addressed in the feigned Junian hand, were sent to a Miss Giles at Bath, in the winter of 1770—1. Later, before this copy was the subject of investigation, Sir P. Francis gave his second wife another copy, in his own hand and on a portion of the same sheet of paper as Miss Giles's copy, among other specimens of his early verses.

<sup>2</sup> See the article by Sir Leslie Stephen in *The English Historical Review*, April 1888. The letter to Chatham was sent through Calcraft.

<sup>3</sup> Yet the evidence here is rather negative than positive. See Hayward, *More about Junius*.

remains unexplained<sup>1</sup>—though some insult received by Francis in the course of his official duties is an easy supposition—the fury he manifests against Barrington in 1772 is in precise harmony with the mysterious retirement of D'Oyly and Francis which partly forms the theme of that attack. Then, the characters of Junius and Francis markedly coincide. The same pride, the same fierce hatreds, the same implacable revenge and the same good intention towards the public interest meet us in both. Even the seeming improbability of Junius's hostile reference to Calcraft is paralleled by Francis's readiness, when piqued, to put the worst construction on his friends. At the same time, a difficulty arises in the question as to Francis's ability to write the letters. True, there are Junian turns in his productions of later date. He shares that trait with many writers, and, high though his reputation as a pamphleteer was, we must admit that, if he was Junius in 1770, under his own name in 1780 he was a cooling sun.

To sum up, the letters of Junius seem to be brought home to a small group which included Calcraft, Francis and, perhaps, Lord Temple<sup>2</sup>. They passed through Francis's hands, and he is their most likely author. He evidently wished to be thought so; but, if he was, the malignant talent they displayed could only develop in secrecy, or, perhaps, his prime was short. He remains in his real character a pretender only, in his assumed, a shade: *stat nominis umbra*.

In Junius, we have the culmination of a series of political writings; but his merits and defects do not exhaust theirs. Abuse and slander and political hatred are continually to be found in all. These blameworthy features should not obscure the quantity of solid facts and serious argument put forward for the public information, in many able and honest pamphlets and letters. It is easier for posterity than it was for the writers to judge of their fairness and accuracy; not so easy, perhaps, to perceive that, with their open discussion and criticism, they were the chief safeguards of the responsibility of government to public opinion.

<sup>1</sup> The explanation may lie hid in the lost Junian letter to the duke, signed 'Lucius,' and seen by Henry Bohn (Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual*, see bibliography).

<sup>2</sup> Temple has even been claimed as the author of the *Letters* (Smith, W. J., *Grenville Papers*, see bibliography); but, beyond the facts that he, doubtless, approved, their purpose and was a patron of virulent pamphleteers and himself a pamphleteer, there does not seem to be corroboration of this theory. It is true that Lady Temple's handwriting had a strong resemblance to that of Junius. But Temple would hardly have sent anonymous letters to his brother-in-law, Chatham, written in a hand which the latter must have known well.

Estmere must overwhelm the soldan; Susy Pye (in *Young Beichan*) and Hind Horn must win their loves. These are entertaining verse. *Earl Brand*, however, like *Babylon*, like the Scandinavian versions, is tragic in the matter; although a closely related ballad, *Erlinton*, killing fifteen of the pursuers, spares the father, and lets the lovers go off happy to the greenwood. *Lady Isabel*, too, escapes by whatever stratagem from her savage wooer; and here, of course, are borrowed motives, as in the 'three cries' for help. There is a glimpse, too, of supernatural aid, as, in some versions, that of the talking birds. In a ballad of similar theme, but, quite prosaic details, *The Fair Flower of Northumberland*, it is hard to say whether the supernatural elements have been toiled down or lost, or else were never in the piece at all. Among other elopement stories of the primitive sort, mainly situation but with a few romantic details, *Gil Breilton*, a sterling old ballad, is worthy of note; the type, however, easily passed into mere sensation, into mawkish and cheap sentiment and into the rout of tales about runaways fair or foul, mainly localised in Scotland. There is even sadder stuff than this. *Brown Robin*, *Willie and Earl Richard's Daughter* (purporting to account for the birth of Robin Hood), *Rose the Red and White Lily*, *The Famous Flower of Serving Men* and *Tom Potts*, are a descending series with very low fall. The singing-robes of balladry are here in rags, and tawdry rags too. There is recovery of old traditions, however, in the Scottish ballads of bride-stealing or elopement like *Katharine Jaffray*—whether Scott's own doing, or compiled from traditional fragments, in any case the model of his *Young Bochinvar*—and in like pieces of varying merit, *Bonny Baby Livingston*, *Eppie Morrie* and *The Lady of Arngosh*—the last named known in many of its details, both as an event about 1736 and as a popular song, but unfortunately recovered only in fragments. Very different, finally, is the tone of two good ballads, *Willie's Lyke-Wake* and *The Gay Goshawk*, where love finds out the way by stratagem and inspires robust verse of the old kind.

Complications of kin make up ballads of domestic tragedy, a most important group; and even the inroads of a doggerel poet upon the old material, even the cheap 'literature' of the stalls, cannot hide that ancient dignity. The motive of *Bewick and Graham*, outwardly a story of two drunken squires near Carlisle, their quarrel, and the sacrifice of two fine lads to this quarrel in the conflict of filial duty with ties of friendship—told, by the way, in verse that often touches the lowest levels—redeems the ballad

from its degraded form and gives it the pathos of a *Cid*. The cry of the dying victor—

Father, cou'd ye not drunk your wine at home,  
And letten me and my brother be?

is not impressive, perhaps, as a quotation ; but in its context and climax it stands with the great things of the great poems. *Andrew Lamie*, enormously popular in the north of Scotland, represents another class of homely ballads, more or less vulgarised by their form, their overdone sentiment and their efforts at literary grace, but not without appeal and a certain force of tradition. Tradition at its purest, and an appeal to which few readers fail in responding, characterise the great ballads of domestic tragedy. *Edward*, for example, is so inevitable, so concentrated, that sundry critics, including the latest editor of Scott's *Minstrelsy*, would refer it to art ; but tradition can bring about these qualities in its own way. *Lord Randal*, with its bewildering number of versions ; *Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard*, a favourite in Shakespeare's day and often quoted ; *Glasgerion* (who may be the 'Glascurion' mentioned in Chaucer's *House of Fame* and may represent the Welsh *Glas Keraint*), a simple but profoundly affecting ballad on a theme which no poet could now handle without either constraint or offence ; *Child Maurice* ; *The Cruel Brother* ; *The Twa Brothers*—with a particularly effective climax—offer tragedy of the false mistress, the false wife, the false servant, and tragedy of more complicated matter. Wives false and wives true are pictured in two sterling Scottish ballads, *The Baron o' Brackley* and *Captain Cor*, both founded on fact. *The Braes o' Yarrow* knew another faithful wife. Darker shadows of incest, mainly avoided by modern literature, fall in possibility on *Babylon*, quoted above, and in real horror upon *Sheath and Knife* and *Lizzie Wan*. The treacherous nurse, again, with that bloody and revengeful *Lamkin*—a satiric name—long frightened Scottish children ; and a case of treachery in higher station, involving trial by combat and giving many hints of mediæval ways, is preserved in the old story of *Sir Aldingar*, familiar to William of Malmesbury. Finally, there is the true-love. The adjective is beautifully justified in *The Three Ravens*, unfortunately less known than its cynical counterpart, *The Twa Corbies*. True-love is false in *Young Hunting* ; and fickle lovers come to grief in *Lord Lovel*, *Fair Margaret* and *Sweet William*, and *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*. Fate, not fickleness, however, brings on the tragedy in *Fair Janet*, *Lady Maisey*,

*Clerk Saunders*; while fickleness is condoned and triumphant in ballads which Child calls 'pernicious': *The Broom o' Cowdenknowe* and *The Wylie Wife of the Hie Toun Hie*. Better is the suggestion of *The Wife of Bath's Tale* in the popular *Knight and Shepherd's Daughter*. *Child Waters*, which both Child and Grundtvig praise as the pearl of English ballads, belongs to the well known group of poems celebrating woman's constancy under direst provocation; neither Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale* nor that dramatic poem of the *Nut Brown Maid* pleads the cause of woman with more eloquence. Ellen in the stable, with her new-born child, appeals to any heart:

Lullabye, my ounn deere child!  
Lullabye, deere child, deere!  
I wold thy father were a king,  
Thy mother layd on a beere!

While this ballad has wandered far from the dramatic and choral type, the survival in its structure is marked enough; and its incremental repetition, in several sequences, is most effective.

Ballads of the funeral, echoes of the old *coronach*, *vocero*, whatever the form of communal grief, are scantily preserved in English; *Bonnie James Campbell* and *The Bonny Earl of Murray* may serve as types; but the noblest outcome of popular lament, however crossed and disguised by elements of other verse it may seem in its present shape, is *Sir Patrick Spens*, which should be read in the shorter version printed by Percy in the *Reliques*, and should not be teased into history. The incremental repetition and climax of its concluding stanzas are beyond praise. Less affecting is the 'good night'—unless we let *Johnny Armstrong*, beloved of Goldsmith, pass as strict representative of this type. *Lord Maxwell's Last Good Night*, it is known, suggested to Byron the phrase and the mood of Childe Harold's song. To be a ballad, however, these 'good nights' must tell the hero's story, not simply echo his emotion.

Superstition, the other world, ghost-lore, find limited scope in English balladry. Two ballads of the sea, *Bonnie Annie* and *Brown Robyn's Confession*, make sailors cast lots to find the 'fey folk' in the ship, and so to sacrifice the victim. Commerce with the other world occurs in *Thomas Rymer*, derived from a romance, and in *Tam Lin*, said by Henderson to be largely the work of Burns. *Clerk Colvill* suffers from his alliance with a mermaid. *The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry*, a mournful little ballad from Shetland, tells of him who is 'a man upo' the lan'; but a seal,

'a silkie in the sea.' Other transformation ballads are *Kemp Owyne*, *Allison Gross* and *The Laily Worm*. In *Sweet William's Ghost*, however, a great favourite of old, and in the best of all 'supernatural' ballads, *The Wife of Usher's Well*, dignified, pathetic, reticent, English balladry competes in kind, though by no means in amount, with the riches of Scandinavian tradition.

Epic material of every sort was run into the ballad mould. *King Orfeo* finds Eurydice in Shetland; the ballad is of very old structural type. Sacred legends like that of *Sir Hugh*, and secular legends such as *Hind Horn*, occur; while *Sir Cawline* and *King Estmere* are matter of romance. Possibly, the romances of Europe sprang in their own turn from ballads; and *Sir Lionel*, in the Percy folio, with its ancient type of structure, may even reproduce the kind of ballads which formed a basis for *Sir Cawline* itself. Minstrels, of course, could take a good romance and make it over into indifferent ballads; three of these are so described by Child—*The Boy and the Mantle*, *King Arthur and King Cornwall* and *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*. With the cynical *Crow and Pie* we reach the verge of indecency, also under minstrel patronage, though it is redeemed for balladry by a faint waft of tradition. This piece, along with *The Baffled Knight* and *The Broomfield Hill*, is close to the rout, from which Tom D'Urfey selected his *Pills to Purge Melancholy*. Thoroughly debased is *The Keach in the Creel*; but *The Jolly Beggar*, especially in the 'old lady's' manuscript, is half-redeemed by the dash and swing of the lines. Old ladies, as one knows from a famous anecdote of Scott, formerly liked this sort of thing, without losing caste, and saw no difference between it and the harmless fun of *Get Up and Bar the Door*, or the old story, which Hardy seems to record as still a favourite in Dorsetshire, of *Queen Eleanor's Confession*.

With this ballad we come to history, mainly perverted, but true as tradition. *Lord Delamere*, debased in broadsides, *Hugh Spencer's Feats in France* and the vastly popular *John Dory*; naval ballads like the poor *Sweet Trinity* and the excellent *Sir Andrew Barton*; Scottish *King James and Brown*, and that sterling ballad *Mary Hamilton* which Andrew Lang has successfully called back from Russia to its place at queen Mary's own court, with twenty-eight versions still extant to attest its vogue—all these are typical in their kind. But the historical ballad, recited rather than sung epic in all its purposes and details, and far removed from the choral ballad of dramatic situation, is best studied in those pieces which have become

traditional along the Scottish border. Not all, however, are of the chronicle type. In 1593, a certain freebooter was hanged, and his nephew took good vengeance for him, calling out a ballad; whatever its original shape, one finds it still fresh with the impression of actual deeds; and, in its nervous couplets, its lack of narrative breadth, the lilt and swing of it, one is inclined to call *The Lads of Wamphray* a case of *ipsi confingunt*—a phrase of which Leslie was making use, not far from this date, as to the Borderers and their songs. The dialogue is immediate, and has the old incremental repetition :

O Simmy, Simmy, now let me gang,  
And I vow I'll ne'er do a Crichton wrang.  
O Simmy, Simmy, now let me be,  
And a peck o' goud I'll gie to thee.  
O Simmy, Simmy, let me gang,  
And my wife shall heap it wi' her hand;

This was not made at long range. Epic, on the other hand, and reminiscent, is *Dick o' the Cow*—cited by Tom Nashe—a good story told in high spirits; long as it is, it has a burden, and was meant to be sung. *Archie o' Canfield*, *Hobie Noble*, *Jock o' the Side* and others of the same sort are narratives in the best traditional style; Scott's imitation of these is *Kilmont Willie*—at least it is so much his own work as to deserve to bear his name. Still another class is the short battle-piece, of which *Harlaw*, *Bothwell Bridge* and even *Flodden Field*, preserved by Deloney, may serve as examples. *Durham Field*, in sixty-six stanzas, was made by a minstrel. Refusing classification, there stand out those two great ballads, probably on the same fight, *Cheviot* and *Otterburn*. The version of the former known as *Chevy Chase*, 'written over for the broadside press,' as Child remarks, was the object of Addison's well known praise; what Sidney heard as 'trumpet sound' is not certain, but one would prefer to think it was the old *Cheviot*. One would like, too, the liberty of bringing Shakespeare into the audience, and of regarding that ancient ballad as contributing to his conception of *Hotspur*. These are no spinsters' songs, but rather, in the first instance at least, the making and the tradition of men-at-arms. A curiously interlaced stanza arrangement, here and there to be noted in both the old *Cheviot* and *Otterburn*, as well as Richard Sheale's signature to the former as part of his minstrel stock, imply considerable changes in the structure of the original ballad. Sheale, of course, had simply copied a favourite song; but the fact is suggestive.

Last of all, the greenwood. *Johnie Cock*, says Child, is 'a precious specimen of the unspoiled traditional ballad.' A single situation and event, it contrasts sharply with a long story like *Adam Bell* as well as with the various pieces, short or long, which deal with Robin himself. From *Johnie Cock* to the *Gest* is a process of great interest to the student of traditional verse. Had the *Gest*, indeed, been made by its humble rhapsode in an unlettered age, the epic process would have had even more scope, and would have drawn upon poetic sources already claimed for deliberate composition and the literary record. As it is, Robin may be proud of his place. 'Absolutely a creation of the ballad muse,' he is the hero of a sterling little epic, and of thirty-six extant individual ballads, good and bad; the good are mainly of a piece with the old epic material, and the bad are indebted for their badness to the corruptions of the broadside press, the editing for garlands and the exhausted vitality of late tradition. Robin has a definite personality throughout, though the degenerate ballads, as in the case of late poems about Charlemagne, make him anybody's victim. Any local hero could be exalted by the simple process of outwitting and trouncing the old master of that craft. One of the latest poems, a dreary compilation called the *True Tale of Robin Hood*, the only piece in Child's collection which is not anonymous, is the work of Martin Parker. But one forgets trash. Robin remains as the best ballads and the *Gest* have drawn him—generous, brave, pious, with a touch of melancholy and a touch of humour unknown to the strictly choral muse. The narrative art of this good verse is very high. No story is better told anywhere than the story of Robin's loan to Sir Richard and its payment; humour is held firmly in hand; and Chaucer himself could not better the ease and sureness of the little epic. Nor does the *Gest* improve in all ways upon its material. *Robin Hood and the Monk* is a sterling piece of narrative. The brief close of the *Gest*, telling, in five stanzas, how Robin was 'beguiled' and slain, and rather awkwardly quoting an unconnected bit of dialogue, should be compared with the ballad of *Robin Hood's Death* from the Percy folio. Here, in spite of eighteen missing stanzas, the story is admirably told. Every incident counts: the testy humour of Robin at the start, the mysterious old woman banning him as she kneels on the plank over 'black water,' the fatal bleeding, the final struggle, revenge, pious parting and death—good narrative throughout. It is clear that a process had taken place in the gradual formation of this

cycle which not only brought its several parts into fair coherence, but, also, exercised a reactionary influence upon tradition itself. In any case, with these ballads of Robin Hood, balladry itself crossed the marches of the epic, and found itself far from the old choral, dramatic improvisations, though still fairly close to the spirit and motive of traditional verse.

A word remains to be said on the sources and the values of British ballads as a whole. Common 'Aryan' origin, though it was still held in a modified form by Gaston Paris, can no longer be maintained so as to account for the community of theme in the ballads of Europe. What has been done by scholars like Child and Grundtvig, by Nigra, Bugge and others, is to have established certain groups, more or less definite, which, in different lands and times, tell the same general story or give the same particular motive or detail. To account for these groups is another task. A pretty little ballad from Shetland narrates in quite choral, dramatic form the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Bugge has traced the same story from a Danish ballad far back into mediæval times; its ultimate source, to be sure, is the classical account. Another source, we have seen, is legend; still another is the direct historical event. Evidently, then, the matter of sources is something to be settled for the narrative part of each individual ballad; but, however great the interest of this investigation may be, however obvious its claims and satisfactory its results, it does not affect the specific ballad as a literary form. The structure of the ballad—what makes it a species, the elements of it—derives from choral and dramatic conditions; what gives it its peculiar art of narrative is the epic process working by oral tradition, and gradually leading to a new structure with choral and dramatic elements still surviving, though dwindling, in the guise of refrain and incremental repetition. The metrical form remains fairly constant throughout. With certain other formal characteristics, the commonplaces, the conventional phrases and motives, there is no space to deal here. So, too, with regard to imitations good and bad, we can only refer to Scott's *Kinmont Willie* for one class, and, for the other, to that famous forgery, the *Hardyknute* of Lady Wardlaw.

The aesthetic values of the ballad call for no long comment. They are the values which attach to rough, strong verse intent upon its object. Trope and figure are out of the question, and all feats of language as such. No *verborum artifex* works here. The appeal is straight. It is, indeed, ridiculous to call the ballads

'primitive'; not only have they a developed art of their own, but they are crossed at every turn by literary influences, mainly working for coherence of narrative, which are indirect, indeed, yet sure. Nevertheless, the abiding value of the ballads is that they give a hint of primitive and unspoiled poetic sensation. They speak not only in the language of tradition, but also with the voice of the multitude; there is nothing subtle in their working, and they appeal to things as they are. From one vice of modern literature they are free: they have no 'thinking about thinking,' no feeling about feeling. They can tell a good tale. They are fresh with the open air; wind and sunshine play through them; and the distinction, old as criticism itself, which assigns them to nature rather than to art, though it was overworked by the romantic school and will be always liable to abuse, is practical and sound.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS VERSE TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY—FINAL WORDS

IN a previous chapter<sup>1</sup>, something was said of the changes in language and in thought which accompanied the Norman conquest of England, and it was pointed out how short a time, comparatively speaking, was needed for the fusion of race with race. The incorporation of a French vocabulary into the vernacular was, inevitably, a more prolonged operation; or, to speak more precisely, it was longer before that fusion became apparent and was reflected in the literature of the people, the literary or fashionable language being, for many a long year, the tongue of the conquerors. The influence of the courtly literature of the ruling caste in more than one direction has already been pointed out<sup>2</sup>. It is no part of the scope of this work to encroach upon what more properly belongs to the earlier literature of a modern language other than our own, or to tell over again what has already been dealt with in the pages of Gaston Paris, in the volumes of Petit de Julleville and elsewhere; but our interest in medieval French letters must always be more than that of mere neighbours. Thus, the period now reached in the history of our own literature, when the death of Gower points, approximately, to the end of French letters in England, offers an opportunity for mentioning, in the course of a very brief summary, the work of one or two Anglo-Normans whose writings either are intimately connected with English historical events and personages, or have left their impression on the form and matter of the rapidly growing body of vernacular literature. To some of these, special reference has already been made—Philippe de Thaon, whose *Bestiary*<sup>3</sup> belongs to a popular and fascinating type of didactic literature, and helped to furnish

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, pp. 149 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, chapter xiii. See also vol. I, pp. 238, 446, 447, 460, 466 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Dedicated to Adela of Louvain, the second wife of Henry I, for whom Benoit the Anglo-Norman monk versified a *St Brendan* in 1121.

material for early English writers on similar themes, and whose guide to the ecclesiastical calendar, *Li Cumpoz*, sets forth what the ignorant clerk ought to know; Geoffrey Gaimar and Wace, who became the mediums by which earlier English and Latin histories provided material for the work of Layamon; William of Wadington, whose *Manuel* was written, probably, for Normans in Yorkshire, and another 'Yorkshire Norman,' Peter of Langtoft, who were the literary god-fathers of Mannyng of Brunne<sup>1</sup>.

Gaimar's *Estorie des Engles* was based, mainly, on the Old English *Chronicle* and, apart from his relation to Layamon, his chief value for us lies in the sections which deal with contemporary matters, in his contributions to the story of Havelok and in his descriptions of social manners and customs<sup>2</sup>. Of greater worth is the life of William, first of the Marshal earls of Pembroke and Striguil, regent of England, a soldier and statesman who died in 1219, after having served, for nearly half a century, more than one king of England with rare fidelity, and whose deeds are worthily enshrined in the poem which bears his name. *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, which was finished in 1226, consists of some 19,000 octosyllabic lines, and its discoverer, Paul Meyer, has claimed for it a place in the front rank of French medieval historiography, and as having no superiors in its kind in the writings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries<sup>3</sup>.

Garnier de Pont-Sainte-Maxence's *Vie de St Thomas Becket*, a poem worthy of its subject, and of great historic value; Fantosme's *Chronicle of the Scottish Wars* of 1173-4; Ambroise's *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte*, with Richard Cœur de Lion for its central figure; Old French psalters and saints' lives; moral tales, like those told by the Franciscan Nicole Bozon in the earlier half of the fourteenth century; immoral fables; pilgrimages and gospels for the laity; popular presentations of current science and works on vengery, such as those which probably served the somewhat mythical Juliana Berners; *lais*, as those of Marie de France—all these may be recorded as links in the direct chain which bound French medieval literature to England. To these may be added books of counsel and courtesy, which became models for and directly inspired the popular literature of the native tongue—the 'booke,' for example, 'whiche the knyght of the Toure

<sup>1</sup> Vol. 1, pp. 104, etc., 170, etc., 204, etc., 226 ff., 344 ff., 447, 460, etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, in Wright, T., *A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages*, pp. 64, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Hist. de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. P. Meyer, t. III, p. cii, Paris, 1901.

made to the enseygnement and techyng of his daughters, translated oute of Frenssh in to our maternall Englyssh<sup>1</sup> tongue by me, William<sup>2</sup> Caxton<sup>3</sup>; dialogues, as those contained in a *maniere de langage que l'enseignera bien a droit parler et escrire douz françois*<sup>4</sup>, which help to make clearer to us the social relations of the fourteenth century; and French versions of the old romances such as Caxton and his followers popularised, to which reference has already been made, and which will be further discussed when the prose of the sixteenth century is under consideration.

Political verse to the end, approximately, of the reign of Edward II was glanced at in a previous chapter<sup>2</sup>. In addition to the two poems in the mixed languages therein mentioned, may be noted a *Song against the King's Taxes*, written in the reign of Edward II, in five-line stanzas, the first half of each line, save the fifth, being in Anglo-Norman and the latter half of each line and the whole of the fifth being in Latin. Its theme and its form can best be seen by such a stanza as the following:

*Depus que le roy voderá tam multum cepisse,  
Entre les riches si purra satis invenisse;  
E plus, à ce que m'est avys, et melius fecisse .  
Des grantz partie averpris, et parvis pepercisse.  
Qui capit argentum sine causa peccat egentum<sup>3</sup>.*

From the reign of Edward III onwards, English, as the main vehicle for political verse, apparently ousts Anglo-Norman. A late Anglo-Norman poem, written about 1338, *Leus veus du hairon*, *The Vows of the Heron*<sup>4</sup>, has, for its object, the goading of the young king Edward III to war with France, by comparing him with what was held to be a cowardly bird. The poem relates that Robert of Artois, who had his own purposes to serve, caused a heron to be served at the king's table and called aloud the bird's virtues and vices as it was carried in:

*Et puis que couers est, je dis à mon avis,  
C'au plus couart qui soit ne qui oncques fust vis  
Donrrai le hairon, c'est Édouart Loeis,  
Deshiretés de Franche, le nobile pais,  
Qu'il en estoit drois hoirs; mès cuefs li est sulis,  
Et por sa lasquethé en morra dessaisis;  
S'en dois bein au hairon voer le sien avis.*

This is too much for the king; and he and his courtiers make their warlike vows on the heron. The war that ensued, together with

<sup>1</sup> See P. Meyer, *Revue Critique*, 1870, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, p. 370.

<sup>3</sup> Wright, T., *Political Songs*, 1839, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. Wright, T., 1859, Rolls Series.

the Scottish war of the earlier years of the boy-king's reign, were sung by Laurence Minot; and the death of the king, in 1377, called forth a tribute<sup>1</sup> the overmastering thought in which was the very old fashioned sentiment:

That alle thing weres and wasteth away.

That the evils of the time were not absent from the minds of thinking men we see by the writings of Gower and by the *Plowman* poems. In these last, there is no room for the light hearted gaiety, the easy-going happiness that causes us to regard Chaucer, though a contemporary, as almost belonging to another world. To the writers of the *Plowman* poems the times were out of joint and more than jesting was required to set them right; their sharp solemn rimeless lines ring in the ear like the sound of an alarm or the first few strokes of the passing bell.

The unquiet reign of Henry IV saw the miserable game of heresy-hunting at work under the statute *De Heretico Comburendo*, and political revolt after revolt in the north. Four years after the burning of William Sawtre the Lollard, at Smithfield, a lay court condemned the saintly archbishop Richard le Scrope of York to death for high treason and provided that the sentence should be carried out as ignominiously as might be. The virtues of the archbishop are celebrated in Latin and in English verses; and the political and religious 'crimes' of the Lollards are not forgotten by other literary clerks.

Both Latin and English poems against the Lollards and songs against friars, are of common occurrence. One poet sings

That dele with purses, pynnes and knyves,  
With gyldes, gloves, for wenches and wyves<sup>2</sup>,

while another, in a fifteenth century MS, combines Latin and English, beginning

Freeres, freeres, wo 3e be!  
*ministri malorum*,  
For many a manes soule bringe 3e  
*ad poenas infernarum*<sup>3</sup>

and continuing, in violent lines which cannot be quoted, to set forth current crimes. In the Middle Ages, popular singers, 'westours and rimers, minstrels or vagabonds,' who followed their calling along the king's highway, helped, often enough, to fan the flames

<sup>1</sup> *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. Wright, T., 1859, Rolls Series, vol. 1, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ed. Wright, T. and Halliwell, J. O., 1841—3, vol. II, p. 247.  
See also vol. I, p. 322.

of rebellion, political and religious; it should be remembered to their credit that, consciously or unconsciously, their work was not without effect in the emancipation of the people.

Ten years after the 'Glory of York' had been executed, the victory of Agincourt gave further employment to song writers; but the specimen of their work preserved in the Pepysian MS does not bear comparison with later poems on the same theme. Professional and laudatory verses on deaths and coronations we can leave aside; but the interest of its satire should preserve from forgetfulness a poem on the siege of Calais, 1436. 'The duk of Burgayn,' with 'grette prid' set forth 'Calys to wyn,' and his preparations are told with a rare spirit of raillery. In Calais itself, even

The women, both yung and old,  
Wyth stones stuffed every scaffold,  
The spared not to swee ne swynk:  
With boylyng cawdreus, both grett and smalle,  
Yf they wold assaute the walle,  
All hote to gev them drynk!

In 1436—7, was written one of the most important and remarkable of early English political poems, *The Libel* [or little book] of *English Policy*. The poem begins by 'exhortynge alle Englande to kepe the see environ,' and it is an early example of the political insight which recognised that the natural source of the greatness of a small island lay on the sea; its influence on later naval developments can scarce be doubted. English commercial relations with foreign nations are discussed by the anonymous author at considerable length; 'the commodityes of Spayne and of Flaunders,' and of many another community are reviewed, and oddly enough these things read in rime:

And lycorys, Syvyle oyle, and grayne,  
Whyte Castelle sope, and wax, is not in vayne;  
Iren, wolle, wadmele, gotefel, kydefel also,  
Ffor poynt-makers fulle nedefulle be the ij.

The Irish question is well to the fore, and there is a Welsh question as well:

wyth alle your myghte take hede  
To kepe Yrelond, that it be not loste;  
Ffor it is a boterasse and a poste  
Undre England, and Wales another.  
God forbede but eche were othere brothere,  
Of one ligeaunge dewe unto the kynge.

And then the author turns to discuss 'the comodius stokfyshe of Yselonde' brought by the seamen that go out from Bristow

and from Scarborough 'unto the costes cold'; and he harks back to Calais and urges, in language which sounds strangely modern, that there be

set a governaunce.

Set many wittes wythoutene variaunce  
To one accorde and unanimité,  
Put to god wyll for to kepe the see.  
The ende of bataile is pease sikerlye,  
And power causeth pease finally<sup>1</sup>.

The last political poem to which reference need be made here is a mocking dirge, called forth by the death of the king's favourite the duke of Suffolk, on 3 May 1450, 'a dyрге made by the comons of Kent in the tyme of ther rysynge when Jake Cade was theyr cappitayn... writn owt of david norcyn his booke by John stowe<sup>2</sup>.' The poem describes how 'bissshopes and lordes, as grete reson is,' took their several parts in his funeral service, and it deserves mention by reason of the prosodic art shown in the refrain, 'in which the passing-bell slowness of the first half

For | Jack | Napes' | soul pla- |

suddenly turns head over heels into a carillon of satiric joy and triumph 'with'

cebo and | dirige<sup>3</sup>!

A careful examination of fourteenth century religious poems preserved in the Vernon MS and elsewhere, of the minor verse of the school of Richard Rolle of Hampole, of passages in the religious plays such as those which tell the story of Abraham and Isaac and of the fugitive verse of the fifteenth century should convince the most sceptical of the wealth of early English anonymous poetry, and of its great prosodic interest; it should abolish the practice of regarding verse associated with the outstanding names, and the so-called 'court-poetry,' as the only poetry worth consideration; and it should help us to render tardy justice to periods sometimes dubbed barren wastes.

The note of simplicity of utterance, often combined with

<sup>1</sup> The quotations are from T. Wright's text, in *Political Poems and Songs*, but see also the first volume of Hakluyt and *The Libell of Englishe Policye*, 1496, *Text und metrische Übersetzung von W. Herisberg, Mit einer geschichtlichen Einleitung von R. Pauli*, Leipzig, 1878. Cf. also the poem *On England's Commercial Policy*, Wright's *Political Poems and Songs*, vol. II, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Political, Religious and Love Poems*, Lambeth MS, etc., ed. Furnivall, F. J., E.E.T.S. 1866, new edition, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Saintsbury, G., *A History of English Prosody*, vol. I, p. 261.

perfection of form, which is struck in such poems as the thirteenth or early fourteenth century lyric from the Egerton MS

Somer is comen and winter is gon,  
   thiſſe day beynnys to lunge,  
 And this foules everichon  
   joye hem wit songe!  
 So stronge kare me bint,  
 Al wit joye that is funde  
   in londe,  
  
 Al for a child  
 That is so milde  
   of honde<sup>1</sup>,

is found again in the *Sayings of St Bernard* in the Vernon MS

Where ben heo that biſoreu us weren,  
 That houndes ladden and haukes beeren,  
 And hedden feld and wode;  
 Thiſe Riche ladys in heofe bour,  
 That wereden gold in heore treſſour,  
 With heore brihte rode<sup>2 3</sup>?

It is carried on by Michael of Kildare, in a hymn written at the beginning of the fourteenth century in which there are movements like this:

This worldis love is gon a-wai,  
 So dew on grasse in someris dai,  
 Few ther beth, wellawai!  
   that lovith Goddis lore<sup>4</sup>;

it becomes exquisitely melodious in the northern Hampole poems of, approximately, the middle of the fourteenth century, notably in the alliterative verses beginning

My trewest tresowre sa trayturly taken,  
 Sa bytterly bondyn wyth bytand handes;  
 How sone of thi servandes was thou forsaken,  
 And lathly for my lufe hurld with thair handes<sup>5</sup>,

and in Eve's lines in the 'Coyentry' play:

Alas! that evyr that speche was spokyn  
   That the fals aungel seyde unto me.  
 Alas! oure makers wyddying is brokyn  
   Ffor I have towchyd his owyn dere tre.  
 Oure fleschly eyn byn al unlokyn,  
   Nakyd for synne ouresylf we see,  
 That sory appyl that we han wokyn  
   To dethe hathe brouth my spouse and me<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Reliquiae Antiquae*, vol. i, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> complexion.

<sup>3</sup> *Minor Poems of the Vernon MS, with poems from Digby MS*, vol. ii, p. 521, ed. Furnivall, F. J., E.E.T.S. 1901.

<sup>4</sup> *Reliquiae Antiquae*, vol. ii, p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> Horstman's ed., vol. i, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> *Ludus Coventriae*, ed. Halliwell, J. O., pp. 27, 28, 1841.

It exerts magical power in the beautiful carol from the early fifteenth century Sloane MS :

I syng of a mayden that is makeles,  
Kyng of alle kynges to here bone che chea.  
He cam also styлле ther his moder was,  
As dew in Apryll that fallyt on the gras.  
He cam also styлле to his moderes bowr,  
As dew in Aprille that fallyt on the flour.  
He cam also styлле ther his moder lay,  
As dew in Aprille that fallyt on the spray<sup>1</sup>;

it shows itself capable of infinite pathos in the appeal of Isaac to his father in the Chester play:

Alas! father, is that your will,  
Your owne childe here for to spill  
Upon this wylles brynke?  
Yf I have trespassed in any degree,  
With a yard you maye beate me;  
Put up your sword if your will be,  
For I am but a Childe

. . . . .

*Abraham*

Come hitner, my Child, that art so sweete;  
Thou must be bounden hand and feete<sup>2</sup>;

it reveals passion, strong though subdued to that it works in, in the *Quia amore languo* of the Lambeth MS c. 1430<sup>3</sup>; and it finds an echo in the poem to the Virgin, printed towards the close of the fifteenth century in *Speculum Christiani*, beginning

Mary moder, wel thou be!  
Mary moder, thenke on me.

There are, of course, duller and more sophisticated utterances than these. Mysticism often acts as a clog and didactic aim frequently achieves its usual end and produces boredom. But that happy sense of familiarity with the company of Heaven, which is one of the characteristics of an age of profound faith, finds delightful expression in hymns from Christ to His 'deintiest damme'<sup>4</sup> and, above all, in the religious plays. These last, which were written to be understood by the common folk, are

<sup>1</sup> *Songs and Carols*, ed. Wright, T., Warton Club, 1861, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Chester Plays*, ed. Deimling, H., E.E.T.S., 1898, p. 75. The extant MSS of the Chester cycle belong to the end of the sixteenth century, but the substantial features of the passage quoted above are found in the fifteenth century Brome play on the same subject (*Anglia*, vii, pp. 816—837), with which the Chester play would seem to be connected.

<sup>3</sup> *Political etc. Poems*, ed. Furnivall, F. J., p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ*, ed. Furnivall, F. J., p. 8, E.E.T.S. 1867.

mirrors which reflect the tastes of the people, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. An ingenuous audience wished to be moved easily to tears and laughter; rough humour and simple pathos jostled each other on the booths or travelling stages on which were set forth the shrewishness of Noah's wife, and Isaac submissive to his father's stroke, the boisterous comedy of quarrelling shepherds and their criticism of the angelic voices. It was not gold and frankincense and myrrh that would appeal most to the imagination of the idler in the market place, but a ball, a bird and 'a bob of cherys,' which the visiting shepherds give to the Child-Christ, as they address him with

Hayll, lytyll tyne mop!  
Of oure crede thou art crop;  
I wold drynk on thy cop,  
Lytyll day starne<sup>2</sup>.

Truly these writers and actors 'served God in their mirth,' but they were not allowed to go on their way unmolested. There are poems against miracle plays as against friars, and sermons too; and in the mass of carols and love lyrics, whether amorous or divine, which form a characteristic feature of fourteenth and fifteenth century English poetry, and which are treated in an earlier chapter in this volume, there appear now and then the spoil-sports who think 'the worlde is but a vanyte'<sup>3</sup> and, when the briar holds the huntsman in full flight, only take it as a warning to ponder on more solemn things.

Of the purely didactic literature that was intended for daily needs, a typical example may be seen in John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, a versified translation from Latin of a very practical kind, concerned with the things that are to be done or left undone, the duties of priests and what they are to teach and all such items as entered into the daily religious life of the people<sup>3</sup>. To this we may add 'babees' books' and poems of homely instruction, in which the wise man teaches his son and the good wife her daughter. For those who were soon able to buy printed books, there were works like the first dated book published in England, the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, whilst Caxton's *Book of Curtesye*, addressed to 'lytyl John,' and his printing of a *Great and Little Cato* sufficiently indicate the popularity of precept and wisdom literature. The middle of the

<sup>1</sup> *Towneley Plays*, ed. England, G. and Pollard, A. W., 1897, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ*, pp. 83 and 91.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Peacock, E., E.E.T.S. 1848.

fifteenth century gives us the *Book of Quinte Essence*, an early treatise on 'natural science,' in which, among other wonderful things, we learn how 'to reduce an oold feble evangelik man to the firste strenkthe of yongthe' and how 'to make a man that is a coward, hardy and strong.' And, in a fourteenth century MS you may run your eyes over medical recipes<sup>1</sup>, which vary between cures 'for the fever quarteyn' and devices 'to make a woman say the what thu'askes hir.' Woman was ever a disturbing factor, and the songs of medieval satirists do not spare her. One of them ends his verses with the counsel of despair:

I hold that man ryght wele at ese,  
That cal turn up hur haltur and lat hur go<sup>2</sup>.

To the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries belongs the figure of Robin Hood the outlaw, who was known to the writers of *Piers Plowman* in the middle of the fourteenth century and stories of whose deeds were first printed by Wynkyn de Worde at the close of the fifteenth century, in the *Lytell Geste*; and with a reference to him this brief summary of 'rank and file' literature must close. He is the typical hero of English medieval popular romance, 'open-handed, brave, merciful, given to archery and venery, good-humoured, jocular, loyal, woman-protecting, priestcraft-hating, Mary-loving, God-fearing, somewhat rough withal, caring little for the refinements of life, and fond of a fight above all things'<sup>3</sup>. In this combination of qualities we may fitly see that blending of Norman and Englishman which helped to make the England of the ages of faith a 'merrie England.' Akin in many ways to Hereward the Englishman and Fulk Fitz-Warin the Norman, he represents, in the ballads that grew up around his name, the spirit of revolt against lordly tyranny, and he stands for the free open life of the greenwood and the oppressed folk. The ruling classes had their Arthur and his knights, their 'romances of prys,' the placid dream-world in which moved the abstractions of Stephen Hawes and the bloodless creatures

<sup>1</sup> *Reliquiae Antiquae*, vol. 1, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 77. A more gallant feeling is shown in the records of the *Pwt*, a fourteenth century association established in London originally by foreign merchants in imitation of similar associations in France, *en le honour de Dieu, Madame Seinte Marie and all saints, por ceo qe jolikes, pais, honestes, douceur, deboneiretes, e bon amour, sans infinite, soit maintenus*. In that society, no lady or other woman being allowed to be present at the festival of song, it was held to be the duty of members *de honorer, cheir, et loer trevoties dames, totes heures en tous lieux, au tant en leur absence come en leur presence*. See *Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis*, vol. II, p. 225, *Liber customarum*, Rolls Series, 1860, ed. Riley, H. T.

<sup>3</sup> Hales, J. W., *Perry Folio*.

of the 'court-poetry.' The people had their songs by the way-side, their ballads born of communal dance and their more or less pagan festivals, at which sons of the soil, maidens and apprentices who had been bidden to

Suffer maister and maistresse patiently  
And doo their bidding obediently  
Serve atte the tabille manerly<sup>1</sup>

could, for a while, escape from these duties and enter into a life of their own.

A word may be permitted by way of postscript, not merely to this chapter but also to the present volume. It has been sometimes urged that the fifteenth century, in the matter of purely English literature, is dull and uninteresting; that it is an uninviting, barren waste, in which it were idle and unprofitable to spend one's time when it can be fleeted carelessly in 'the demesnes that here adjacent lie,' belonging to the stately pleasure houses of Chaucer and the Elizabethans on the one side and on the other. It would rather appear that a century, the beginning of which saw the English Mandeville translators at work, and the end of which saw one of those versions printed; a century to which may be credited *The Flower and the Leaf*, the Paston letters, Caxton's prefaces and translations, the immortal Malory, lyrics innumerable, sacred and secular, certain ballads, in the main, as we now know them, *The Nut Brown Maid* (in itself sufficient, in form and music and theme, to 'make the fortune' of any century), carols and many of the miracle plays in their present form, can well hold its own in the history of our literature as against the centuries that precede or follow it. At least it is not deficient either in variety of utterance or in many-sidedness of interest. It is not merely full of the promise that all periods of transition possess, but its actual accomplishment is not to be contemned and its products are not devoid either of humour or of beauty.

• <sup>1</sup> *Reliquiae Antiquae*, vol. II, p. 223. •

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II

The following parallel passages from the two Wyclifite versions will show some of the differences between them. Broadly speaking, these differences are greatest in the earlier part of the Old Testament, and are only small in parts of the New Testament. It should be noticed that the order of the books in the Old Testament and Apocrypha is different from that of the A.V., following the *Vulgate*.

### EARLIER VERSION.

#### *Exodus* xv, 1-5.

<sup>1</sup>Synge we to the Lord, forsothe gloriously he is magnysied; the hors and the steyer up he throwe doun into the see. <sup>2</sup>My strengthe and my preysyng the Lord; and he is maad to me into helthe. This my God, and hym Y shal gloryfie; the God of my fader, and hym Y shal enhaunce. <sup>3</sup>The Lord as a man fister, Almyti his name; <sup>4</sup>the chare of Pharaon and his oost he throwe fer into the see. His chosun princes weren turned vpsedoun in the reed see: <sup>5</sup>the depe watris couerden hem; thei descended into the depthe, as a stoon.

### LATER VERSION.

<sup>1</sup>Synge we to the Lord, for he is magnysied gloriously; he castide doun the hors and the stiere in to the see. <sup>2</sup>My strengthe and my preisyng is the Lord; and he is maad to me in to helthe. This is my God, and Y schal glorifie hym; the God of my fadir, and Y schal enhaunse hym. <sup>3</sup>The Lord is as a man fister, his name is Almyti; <sup>4</sup>he castide doun in to the see the charis of Farao, and his oost. Hise chosun princis weren drenchid in the reed see; <sup>5</sup>the depe watris hiliden hem; thei jeden doun in to the depthe as a stoon.

#### *Isaiah* vi, 1-4.

<sup>1</sup>In the yer in which diede king Osias, I sa; the Lord sittende vp on an hei sete, and rered vp; and ful was the hous of his mageste, and the thingis that vnder hym weren, fulfilled temple. <sup>2</sup>Serafyn stoden vp on it, sixe wenges to the oon, and sixe to the other; with two thei couereden the face of hym, and with two thei couereden the feet of hym, and with two thei flown. <sup>3</sup>And they criiden the tother (*var.* toon) to the tother, and seiden, Hoeli, hoeli, hoeli, Lord God of oostes; ful is al the erthe of the glorie of hym. <sup>4</sup>And to-moued ben the thresholdes of the heenglis fro the vois of the criende, and the hous fulfid is with smoke.

<sup>1</sup>In the yer in which the king Osie was deed, Y sei; the Lord sittynge on an hi sete, and reisid; and the hous<sup>b</sup> was ful of his mageste, and the thingis that weren vnder hym, filliden the temple. <sup>2</sup>Serafyn stoden on it, sixe wyngis weren to oon, and sixe wyngis to the tothir: with twei wyngis thei hiliden the face of hym, and with wyngis thei hiliden the feet of hym, and with twei wyngis thei flown. <sup>3</sup>And thei criden the toon to the tother, and seiden, Hoeli, hoeli, hoeli is Lord God of oostis; al erthe is ful of his glorie. <sup>4</sup>And the lyntels aboue of the hennis were moued to-gidere of the vois of the criere, and the hous was fillid with smoke.

As an illustration of the glosses on the above extract (in the later edition), the following are given:

\* *was deed*; not bi departing of the soule from the body, but in which seer he was smytun of God wigh lepre, for he wolde take amys to him the office of priest; for fro that tyme he was arettid deed to the world, as Rabbi Salomon seith.

† *the hous*; that is, the temple bildid of Salamon; notheless this clause, and *the hous was ful of his mageste* is not in Ebreu, neither in bokis amended.

EARLIER VERSION.

• LATER VERSION.

*St Matthew vi, 1—4.*

<sup>1</sup>Take 3e hede, lest 3e don 3our ristwianesse before men, that 3ee be seen of hem, ellis 3e shule nat han meede at 3oure fadir that is in heuene.

<sup>2</sup>Therefore whan thou dost almesse, nyle thou synge before thee in a trumpe, as ypoctitis don in synagogis and streetis, that thei ben maad worshipful of men; forsothe Y saye to 3ou, thei hau resceyued her meede.

<sup>3</sup>But thee doyng almesse, knowe nat the left hond what the rist hond doth, <sup>4</sup>that thi almes be in hidlis, and thi fadir that seeth in hidlis, sal 3elde to thee.

<sup>1</sup>Takith hede, that 3e do not 3oure ristwianesse bi3for men, to be seyn of hem, ellis 3e schulen haue no meede at 3oure fadir that is in heuene.

<sup>2</sup>Therefore whanne thou doist almes nyle thou trumpe 3oford thee, as ypoctitis doon in synagogis and streetis, that thei be worschipid of men, sotheli Y seie to 3ou, they han resceyued her meede.

<sup>3</sup>But whanne thou doist almes, knowe not thi left hond what thi rist hond doith, <sup>4</sup>that thin almes be in hidlis, and thi fadir that seeth in hiddils, schal quyte thee.

If a passage such as *Ephesians ii* be taken, the differences between the two versions will be found even slighter than in the above. These extracts are taken from the edition by Forshall and Madden, but its exhibition of the textual evidence leaves much to be desired. It must be borne in mind that many different workers, in all probability, took part in the translation of each version.

J. P. W.

# BIBLIOGRAPHIES

## CHAPTER I

### PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND ITS SEQUENCE

#### THE MANUSCRIPTS.

**Piers the Plowman.** The forty-five known MSS of *Piers the Plowman* are described by Skeat in vols. I, II, III and IV of his edition of the poem for the Early English Text Society, and, less fully, in vol. II of his large Clarendon Press edition. In 1865, Skeat published, for the E.E.T.S., *Parallel Extracts from Twenty-nine MSS of Piers the Plowman*, and, in 1885, *Parallel Extracts from Forty-five MSS of Piers the Plowman*. A facsimile of MS Laud 656 (C-text) is prefixed to vol. III of the E.E.T.S. edition; and one of Laud Misc. 581 (B-text) may be found in Skeat's *Twelve Facsimiles of Old English MSS* (Oxford, 1892). It has been suggested that MS Laud Misc. 581 is the author's autograph, or, at least, was carefully revised by him, but examination of the corrections made and the errors left unnoted indicates that this is not probable. A MS of the poem (but of what version is unknown) is mentioned in a Yorkshire will of 1396 as 'unūm librum vocatum Piers Plewman' (Testam. Eborac. I, 209, Surtees Soc.); another, in the will of John Wyndhill, rector of Arncliffe in Craven, in 1431 (ib. II, 34); and still another in the will of Thomas Roos, of London, in 1433 (Fifty Earliest English Wills, ed. Furnivall, Additions, p. 2).

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**The Parliament of the Three Ages and Wynners and Wastoure.** The MSS are described by Gollancz in his edition.

**Letters of the Insurgent Leaders.** These are in Knighton's *Chronicon* and Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana*, the MSS of which are described by the respective editors, Luard and Riley (Rolls Series).

**Peres the Ploughmans' Crede.** The MSS are described in Skeat's editions.

**The Ploughman's Tale.** No MS is known to exist.

**Jacke Upland, etc.** No MS of *Jacke Upland* is known to exist. The Reply of Friar Daw Topias and Jack Upland's Rejoinder are preserved in MS Digby 41 of the Bodleian Library, cf. Wright, *Political Poems and Songs*, II, p. 39 n.

**The Crowned King** is preserved in MS Douce 95 of the Bodleian Library, cf. Skeat's E.E.T.S. ed. of *Piers the Plowman*, III, pp. 523 ff.

**Death and Liffe and The Scottish Ffeilde** are preserved in the Percy Folio MS; an imperfect copy of the latter is also contained in a MS of queen Elizabeth's time belonging to the Legh family at Lyme Hall, Cheshire, and published in 1855 (see below).

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*Piers the Plowman.*

## (B-text.)

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## (C-text.)

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*Jacke Upland, etc.*

Jack vp Lande Compyled by the famous Geoffrey Chaucer. *Ezechielis*. xiii.

¶ Wo be vnto you that dishonour me to me people for an handful of barlye & for a pece of bread. Cum priuilegio Regali. [Colophon:]

¶ Prynted for Ihon Gough. Cum Priuilegio Regali. Hazlitt dates this edition c. 1540; Skeat, c. 1536. It is, apparently, the same that John Bale saw in the shop of John Daye; cf. *Index*, p. 274; and *Catalogus*, p. 454. Bale says it is wrongly ascribed to Chaucer; he ascribes it to

Wyclif in both the places just cited. It does not appear in the list of Wyclif's writings in Bale's *Summarium*, though '*Petrus Agricola*, lib. i' (*Piers the Plowman*?), is in the list, fo. 157 r. There have been three editions since: (1) in Speght's *Chaucer* (2nd ed.), 1602; (2) in Wright's *Political Poems and Songs*, II, 16-39; (3) in Skeat's *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, 191-204.

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## CHAPTER II

## RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

RICHARD BOLLE. WYCLIF. THE LOLLARDS

HAMPOLE: WORKS.

Explanaciones super lectiones illas beati Job quae solent in exequiis defunctorum legi cum sermone beati Augustini de misericordia et pia oratione pro defunctis. 4to. Oxford, 1481-5. (Only three copies known, which were once all in the Cambridge Univ. Lib. Sayle, C., Early Eng. Bks in Univ. Lib., Cambridge, 1900 £., No. 79. The same: Paris, c. 1510. See Mattaire, *Annal. Typ.* II, 93.)

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- Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampull** in his contemplacyons of the drede and loue of God with dyuerse tytles as it sheweth in his table *and* The remedy against the troubles of temptacyons. Printed by Wynkyn de Worde. 1506 and 1508 respectively. Also reprinted by him c. 1500 and 1519 respectively. See Sayle, No. 241; also Brit. Mus. Cat. English Printed Books, p. 1317. The 'contemplacyons' are wrongly ascribed to Rolle: see Horstman, II, xlii n. and 73.
- Speculum Spiritualium.** Additur insuper et opusculum Ricardi Hampole de emendacione vite. Paris, 1510. See Sayle, No. 6151.
- D Richardi Pampolitani anglosaxonis eremitae, viri in diuinis scripturis ac veteri illa solidaque Theologia eruditissimi in psalterium Davidicum atque alia quaedam sacrae scripturae monumenta compendiosa juxtaque pia enarratio.** Cologne. 1536.
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- Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole—an English Father of the 'Church and his followers.'** Ed. Horstman, C. 2 vols. 1895-6. Contains most of the English prose and verse writings not in the two preceding works, along with other writings by various mystics of the School, and an ample introduction, bibliography and description of Latin works still in MS, but copied by Horstman for publication. Cf. Kölbing, E., *Engl. Stud.* xxiv, pp. 275-9.
- For full bibliography, see Horstman, II, xxxvi ff. [Very many 'Hampole' MSS are in the Cambridge University, Bodleian and British Museum Libraries.]

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of the arrangement of MSS in Forshall and Madden is that most of the MSS are midland and resemble each other so much as to suggest a school of scribes: the resemblance to dialectal forms in Peacock (see Wager) suggest Oxford as their home. The MS which has 'Nicholay de Herford' written on it has western form. On these points fresh light may be expected from Miss Pauer's coming work.

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## CHAPTER III

## THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH PROSE

## TREVISA. THE MANDEVILLE TRANSLATORS

## (1) TREVISA.

**Bartholomaeus Anglicus** (*f.* 1230-50), sometimes erroneously designated Bartholomew de Glanvil or Glanville, one of the friars minor, an English born scholar of Paris. His classic work was first printed at Basel, c. 1470. It was translated into French before Trevisa translated it into English. *De Proprietatibus Berum*, Wynkyn de Worde, 1495; Berthelet, 1535, shortened and altered; Batman (Batman on Bartholomew), 1582, much shortened and altered. MSS at Helmsham, Burleigh House, Cambridge Univ. Library, Brit. Mus. Harl. 614, Harl. 4789.

Dialogue, between 'Dominus' and 'Clericus,' with an epistle to Lord Berkeley, being introduction to Polychronicon, as in MS Harl. 1900 and Marquis of Exeter's MS at Burleigh House. Printed by Caxton with Polychronicon. Also in John Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys*, vol. 1, ed. Maclean, Gloucester, 1883.

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*Works in Manuscript.*

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**Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum**. Translation from pseudo-Ockham on temporal power of the church. Sermon by Richard FitzRalph abp Armagh, addressed to the pope, against the mendicant friars. Translation.—These two included with Polychronicon in the following MSS: Brit. Mus. Addit. 24,194; Harl. 1900; St John's Coll., Camb., and with Bartholomaeus at Burleigh House. Probably anterior to Polychronicon.

**Nicodemus de Passione Christi**. Translation. Brit. Mus. Addit. 16,165.

(?) **Vegetius de Re Militari** and (?) **Egidius de Regimine Principum**. Translations doubtful. Bodleian, Digby MSS, 233.

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(2) MANDEVILLE.

\* French version (? oldest) *Bibl. Nat. Nov. Acq. fr.* 4515. First printed edition, possibly, was that of Pietro de Cornero, Milan, 1490.

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Edition of Egerton MS, 1982. *The Buke of John Mandeville*. Ed. for Roxburghe Club by Warner, G. F. 1889. With a French version, MS Harl. 4383, apparently original of Cotton MS. With introduction and notes, on authorship, versions, sources and MSS. The principal authority on Mandeville.

Editions of defective text (as Brit. Mus. Harl. 3954 and others). Pynson (no date), unique copy in Grenville Library, Brit. Mus.; Wynkyn de Worde, 1499, *A lytell Treatise or Booke, named John Mandevyll, Knyght, borne in Englande, in the towne of Saynt Abone, and speaketh of the wayes of the Holy Lande toward Jherusalem, and of the Marvyles of Ynde and other diverse Countries*; and 1503; Este, 1568; T. Stanby, 1618 (woodcuts) and many later.

Outremeuse, Jean d'. *Ly Myreur des Histors [with La geste de Liège]*. Ed. Borgnet (and Bormans). 6 vols. Brussels, 1864-7. See especially vol. III, p. 57. Also 1887, ed. Bormans. *Chronique*, etc.

For further bibliographical information, see edd. Warner and Halliwell, also Warner in *Dictionary of National Biography*; Vogels, J., *Die ungedruckten lateinischen Versionen Mandevilles*, Crefeld, 1886; Schönborn, C. G., *Bibliographische Untersuchungen über die Reisebeschreibung des Sir J. M.*, Breslau, 1840; Tobler, T., *Bibliographia Geographica Palaeatinae*, Leipzig, 1867.

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- Leland, J. *De Scriptoribus Britannicis* contains the anciently accepted errors.
- Mätzner, E. *Altengl. Sprachproben*. Berlin, 1867-9.
- Murray, D. John de Burdeus . . . otherwise Sir J. M. and the Pestilence. Privately pr. Paisley and London, 1891, and in *Black Book of Paisley*, 1835, for MSS of Jean de Bourgogne.
- Nicholson, E. B., in *Academy*, vol. xxv (1884), p. 261, on Bormans; in *Bibliophile Belge*, 1886, p. 236, on Louis Abry's quotation from Outremeuse.
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- Vogels, J. *Handschriftliche Untersuchungen über die englische Versionen Mandeviles*. Grefeld, 1891.
- Wright, T. *Early Travels in Palestine*. 1848.
- Yule, H. *Cathay and the Way Thither*. Vol. I. 1866. For Odoric and notes on journeys.
- [For examples of the state use of English in the 14th cent. see *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, II and III.]

## CHAPTER IV

## THE SCOTTISH LANGUAGE

## EARLY AND MIDDLE SCOTS

Much remains to be done in the study of the development of literary Scots down to the close of the middle period. All earlier work (and, indeed, much of present-day effort) has been confined to the elucidation of the characteristics of special texts. Books like Sinclair's *Observations on the Scottish Dialect* (1782) have a historical interest, but are not of any scientific value. The first important contribution was made by James A. H. Murray in *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland: its Pronunciation, Grammar, and Historical Relations*, printed, in 1873, for the Philological Society. In 1902, the present writer published *Specimens of Middle Scots* with an introduction dealing with the literary forms of Middle Scots. The chapter in this volume is based on that work, to which the reader is referred for details of argument and illustration. Important contributions are being made in the articles in the *New English Dictionary* (ed. Murray, Bradley, and Craigie), and some aid has been given in the *English Dialect Dictionary and Dialect Grammar* (ed. Wright, J.). Jamieson's well-known *Scottish Dictionary*, now useless as a philological guide, may be consulted for illustrative

examples; but the best of these have been incorporated in the New English Dictionary. For the influence of French on Scots, Francisque-Michel's *Inquiry* (u. s.) may be referred to; but, for reasons stated in the chapter, this work should be used with caution. For discussion of the language of special texts, the following references to editorial introductions may be useful: Barbour's *Bruce*, ed. Skeat, W. W., E.E.T.S. 1870-89; revised edition S.T.S. 1894; *The Kingis Quair*, ed. Skeat, W. W., S.T.S. 1884; *Lancelot of the Laik*, ed. Skeat, W. W., E.E.T.S. 1865; *The Complaynt of Scotlande*, ed. Murray, J. A. H., E.E.T.S. 1872; *Bellenden's Lyry*, ed. Craigie, W. A., S.T.S. 1901-3.

## CHAPTER V

## THE EARLIEST SCOTTISH LITERATURE

BARBOUR. BLIND HARRY. HUCHOIN. WYNTOUN. HOLLAND

Apart from books on English literature which contain accounts of Scottish literature, the most important works on the whole subject are:

Irving, David. *History of Scottish Poetry*. Ed. Carlyle, J. A. Edinburgh, 1861. This posthumously published work had been in preparation as early as 1823. Though a work of great learning, it is now out of date.

Henderson, T. F. *Scottish Vernacular Literature*. Second revised edition. 1900.

Millar, J. H. *A Literary History of Scotland*. 1903.

*MSS of Barbour and Blind Harry.*

Barbour. The only edition of the *Bruce* which contains a trustworthy text is that edited for the Early English Text Society by W. W. Skeat, 1870-89 (reprinted, with correction of errata, for the Scottish Text Society, 1893-95). The preface to this edition contains an account of the two MSS, viz. C in the library of St John's College, Cambridge (which is the better, but has lost twenty-five leaves), and E in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. This MS is in the same volume with the unique MS of Blind Harry's *Wallace*. As the colophons inform us, all three MSS were written by John Ramsay; C in 1487, E, *raptim scriptus*, for Simon Lochmalony of Auchtermoney, Fife, in 1489. The MS of *Wallace* was written in 1488. Owing to the longer lines of *Wallace*, Ramsay used a larger page than he had chosen for C and, proceeding to copy the *Bruce* on the same paper, found he had room to write E in double columns.

*Editions of Barbour.*

The unique copy of the earliest known edition, which was published about 1570, and seems never to have been carefully collated, was No. 11 in the sale of W. C. van Antwerp's books at Sotheby's in March 1907. Hart's edition of 1616 contains some lines missing from the existing MSS, and interpolates others. Editions to some extent critical are: Pinkerton's, 1790, Jamieson's, 1820 and Cosmo Innes's, 1856 (*Spalding Club*). The last has an interesting historical introduction. J. T. T. Brown (*Wallace*

and Bruce restudied, Bonn, 1900, pp. 85 ff.) argues that Wyntoun does not attribute a Brut to Barbour but quotes from the Latin of Geoffrey of Monmouth. For other matters contained in Brown's book cf. *Athenaeum* from Nov. 17 to Dec. 8, 1900.

*Anonymous Works sometimes attributed to Barbour.*

- Two of these were first described and assigned to Barbour by Henry Bradshaw in a communication to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society in 1866, reprinted in Bradshaw's *Collected Papers*, pp. 58 ff. They are (a) fragments of a translation of Guido delle Colonne's *Siege of Troy*, (b) the legends of the Saints. Both are printed together (with the exception of the legend of St Machor already published in *Altenglische Legenden, neue Folge*, Heilbronn, 1881) in Horstmann's *Barbours des schottischen nationaldichters Legendensammlung nebst den Fragmenten seines Trojanerkrieges*, Heilbronn, 1882. The authorship has been disproved by Köppel, E., *Die Fragmente von Barbours Trojanerkrieg*, *Englische Studien*, x, 373; and by Buss, P., *Sind die von Horstmann herausgegeben schottischen Legenden ein werk Barbours*, *Anglia*, ix, 493. See also Skeat's *Barbour*, *E.E.T.S.* pp. xlv ff.
- (b) An edition of the legends, with notes and glossary edited by Metcalfe, W. M., has been published by the Scottish Text Society in six parts, 1887-96. The same editor has published separately *The Legends of SS. Ninian and Machor*, Paisley 1904. Some of the lives are assigned to Barbour by Neilson, G. (*Scottish Antiquary*, January 1897; *Athenaeum*, 27 February 1897).
- (c) *The Buik of the most noble and valiant Conquerour Alexander the Great*. Reprinted from a unique copy of about 1580 by the Bannatyne Club in 1831 but not published till 1834. The language is undoubtedly very close to Barbour's, though slightly more modern. Either the book is the work of Barbour preserved in a somewhat later form or the author was saturated with Barbour's diction so that he continually repeats his phrases. The chief difficulty in assigning it to Barbour, as is done by G. Neilson, is that the epilogue of the work, the style of which differs in no respect from the rest, definitely assigns it to the year 1438.

Do the gude and haue Joung,  
As quhyh'm did this nobill King,  
that zit is prysed for his bounte,  
the quether thre hundreth zeir was he,  
Before the tyme that God was borne,  
to saue our saullis that was forlorpe.  
Sen syne is past ane thousand zeir,  
Four hundreth and thættie thair to neir,  
And such and sumdele mair I wis.

Neilson's attempt to explain this away is not satisfactory. See his paper, *John Barbour, poet and translator* (reprinted from the *Transactions of the Philological Society*), 1900; Herrmann, A., *The Forraye of Gadderis, the Vowis*, Berlin, 1900. This latter (which I have not seen) includes also extracts from Sir Gilbert Hay's still unpublished *Buik of King Alexander*, which dates from 1456, but is often confused with the older work (see Gollancz, *Parlement of the Three Ages*, 1897, p. xvii, in which comparative extracts of the two works are given, pp. 140-3). See also A. Herrmann's *Untersuchungen über das schottische Alexanderbuch*, Berlin, 1893, and the Teymouth Castle manuscript of *Sir Gilbert*

Hay's Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour, which contains a summary of the story and extracts (*Wissenschaftliche Beilage zum Jahresbericht der zwölften städtischen Realschule zu Berlin, Ostern 1898*). The Buik of 1438 is assigned by J. T. T. Brown to David Ratis, Confessor of James I of Scotland, and author of *Ratis Raving* (Wallace and Bruce restudied, p. 101).

The death year of Barbour is not quite certain. According to the *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis* (II, p. 212) he died on 13 March, but the year is given absurdly as M.CC.XC. It has been given here as 1396 because in the accounts of the city of Aberdeen presented at Perth on 5 April 1395, he is described as *Archidiacono Aberdonensi ad presens* and as himself receiving his pension of 20s. from the fermey (Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, III, p. 268). Next year, when the accounts are presented on 25 April, his death and the terms of his bequest of his pension to the dean and chapter are recorded and the 20s. are entered as paid to them accordingly (*op. cit.* p. 395). Now, either the accounts were made up before his decease on 13 March 1395, or, owing to his illness or to unpunctual payment, the pension for 1395 was not paid at Martinmas (11 Nov.) as it should have been, when, if he died in 1396, he would have been alive to receive it. His other pension of £20 from the customs of Aberdeen was paid half yearly at Whitsunday and Martinmas, and, as no payment was made in the year from 3 April 1395, to 3 April 1396, it is, perhaps, safer to put his death in 1395.

#### *Blind Harry.*

For Wallace the only good text is that of James Moir for the Scottish Text Society, 1884-9 (The actis and deidis of the illusters and valheand campoun SCHIR WILLIAM WALLACE Kniht of Ellerslie. By Henry the Minstrel commonly known as Blind Harry). David Laing discovered twenty mutilated leaves of an edition printed with the types of Walter Chepman, and, therefore, assigned by him to somewhere about 1508. The next edition, of which only one copy (in the British Museum) is known, was published in 1570, according to the colophon 'Imprentit at Edinburgh be Robert Lekpreuik at the Expensis of Henrie Charteris, & as to be sauld in his Buith, on the North syde of ye gait abone the Throne.' Jamieson edited Wallace along with Barbour's Bruce in 1820. For further details see Moir's edition, introduction, pp. xiii-xviii.

#### *Blind Harry and John de Ramsay.*

Moir in his edition of Harry regarded the praise of Sir John de Ramsay (vii, 890 ff.) as 'due to the fact that the scribe who wrote the only existing copy of the manuscript was a John Ramsay.' In *The Wallace and the Bruce* restudied (Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik, vi; 1900) J. T. T. Brown argues that Ramsay was the real author of the longer books (iv to xi), the composition being suggested by Blind Harry's folk-tales, which survive in Books I to III, though elaborated by Ramsay.

#### *Holland's Howlat.*

Asloan MS (1515 A.D.), Bannatyne MS (1568 A.D.). Only one leaf of a black letter edition of about 1520 survives. Editions by (1) Pinkerton, J., in appendix to vol. III of *Scottish Poems* reprinted from scarce editions, 1792; (2) Laing, D., for Bannatyne Club, 1823, from Asloan MS, reprinted for New Club Series, 1882, by Donaldson, D., with variant readings of Bannatyne MS, itself (3) printed for Hunterian Club, 1890; (4) by

Diebler, A., Chemnitz, 1393; (5) by Amours, F. J., in *Scottish Alliterative Poems*, S.T.S. 1891-2, with commentary, glossary and introduction, 1896-7. Of. also Gutman, Jos., *Untersuchungen über das mittellenglische Gedicht 'The Buke of the Howlat'* (Berliner Beiträge zur germanischen und romanischen Philologie, 1893).

*Poems attributed to Huchown.*

- (a) *Morte Arthure* in Thornton MS of Lincoln cathedral. Editions by (1) Halliwell, J. O., 1847; (2) Perry, G. G., 1865; (3) Bræk, E. (a revision of (2)), 1865, really 1871 (E.E.T.S.); (4) Banks, Mary Macleod, 1900. See also Mennicken, F., *Versbau und Sprache in Huchowns Morte Arthure*, *Bonner Beiträge*, v, 1900; Branscheid, P., *Die Quellen des Stabreimenden Morte Arthure*, *Anglia*, viii, Anz. 178-336.
- (b) *Gest Hystorie of the Destruction of Troy*. MS in Hunterian Museum, Glasgow. Edition by Panton, G. A. and Donaldson, D., 1869, 1874 (E.E.T.S.).
- (c) *The Pistill of Susan*. These are five MSS (see Amours, introduction, xlvii ff.). Editions by (1) Laing, D., in *Select Remains of the Ancient and Popular Poetry of Scotland*, 1822 (reprinted 1884, edited by Small, J., with memorial introduction and additions 1885, rearranged and revised by Hazlitt, W. O., 1895); (2) Horstmann, C., in *Anglia*, i (1877), pp. 85-101 (Vernon MS., Cottonian and Cheltenham MSS in Herrig's *Archiv*, vols. LXII and LXXIV); (3) Köster, H., *Strassburg*, 1895; (4) Amours, F. J. (S.T.S. as above).
- (d) *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*. MSS. (1) Thornton in the Library of Lincoln cathedral; (2) Douce in Bodleian; (3) Ireland at Hale in Lancashire. Editions by (1) Pinkerton, J., in vol. III of *Scottish Poems*, 1792, from Douce MS; (2) Laing, D. (1822, with reprints as above) from Thornton MS; (3) Madden, Sir F., in *Syr Gawayne* (Bannatyne Club, 1839), with variants from Douce MS; (4) Robson, J. (Camden Society, 1842), from Ireland MS; (5) Amours, F. J. (S.T.S. as above).
- (e) *Golagros and Gawane*. No MS authority. There is an entry *Ye Buke of-Syr Gologruss and Syr Gawane* in the old index to the *Asloan MS*, but the text is lost. Editions by (1) Chepman and Myllar (Edinburgh, 1508); (2) Pinkerton, J., in vol. III of *Scottish Poems* (1792 as above); (3) Laing, D., in *The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane and other Ancient Poems* (1827); (4) Madden, Sir F., in *Syr Gawayne* (1839); (5) Trautmann, M., in *Anglia*, II (1879), pp. 395-440; (6) Amours, F. J. (S.T.S. as above).

The statement in the text as to the origin of this tale requires some further explanation. Sir Frederick Madden in *Syr Gawayne* (p. 338) identified the theme as occurring in a prose version of the *Roman de Perceval* first printed in 1530. "A prose version of the same tale is printed from the *Mons MS* in Potvin's edition of Chrétien's *Perceval le Gallois*. The story is contained in the continuation of Chrétien's poem, but, according to most authorities, *not* in the part attributed to Gautier de Douzens, Gaucher de Dourdan or Wauchier de Denain as he is variously called. According to these authorities the author of this part is unknown. The text of Chrétien differs greatly in the MSS and it is much to be regretted that at present there is no satisfactory edition, Potvin's MS being one of the least satisfactory. Much material dealing with the Gawain story will be found in vol. I of Miss J. L. Weston's *Legend of Sir Perceval* (1906). Miss Weston is of opinion (p. 214) that Chrétien and his continuators had a literary source in the Gawain episodes. The writer of that part of the continuation (who,

according to Miss Weston, was Wauchier), as she points out (p. 241) attributes the tale to a certain Bleheris of Wales whom she identifies in Romania, xxxiii, p. 233, and Perceval, p. 289, with the Bledhericus referred to by Giraldus Cambrensis as *famosus ille fabulator*, and, following Gaston Paris, with the Breri quoted by Thomas as authority for his Tristan. This person she is inclined further to identify with a Bledri who was bishop of Llandaff between 983 and 1023 A.D. For the story, compare also Gaston Paris in *Histoire littéraire de France*, xxx. 41, and Gröber in *Grundriss der romanischen Philologie*, ii, i, pp. 596 ff.

The history and nationality of Huchoun have led to much controversy, and definite conclusions have not yet been reached. (See *Athenaeum*, 12 Dec. 1900, and many letters between January and June 1901; G. Neilson's numerous contributions are summarised in the work mentioned below. See also Gollancz's paper to the Philological Society, 3 Nov. 1901, on 'recent theories concerning Huchoun and others,' summarised in *Athenaeum*, 23 Nov. 1901). Such as seem probable are given in the text. The opinion here held is that Neilson goes too far in assigning many other poems to Huchoun in *Sir Hew of Eglintoun* and *Huchoun off the Awle Ryale*: a biographical calendar and literary estimate (*Philosophical Society of Glasgow*, 1900-1), and *Huchoun of the Awle Ryale*, the *Alliterative Poet: A Historical Criticism of Fourteenth Century Poems* ascribed to Sir Hew of Eglintoun (*Glasgow*, 1902), in which references to other literature will be found. Amour's introduction is most valuable for all the poems edited by him in the two volumes for the Scottish Text Society.

#### *Rauf Coilze.*

No MS authority exists. Though given in the index to the *Asdan MS*, the text is lost. Editions by (1) Lekprauik, Robert (Imprint at Sanctandros he R. L., Anno, 1572); (2) Laing, D., 1822 (with reprints as above); (3) Herrtage, S. J. (E.E.T.S.), 1882; (4) Tonndorf, M., Berlin, 1894; (5) Amour, F. J. (S.T.S. as above); (6) Browne, W. H. (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, U.S.A. 1903). Cf. later cognate legends, such as *The King and the Barber*, etc. (Hazlitt, W. C., *Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of Eng.*); *The King and the Miller of Mansfield*, and see also bibliography of chapters XIII and XIV in vol. I of the present work.

#### *Chronicles. (a) Sir Thomas Gray.*

*Scalaonica*. Unique MS, a vellum folio in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The portion from A.D. MLXVI to A.D. MCCCXII was edited by Joseph Stevenson for the Maitland Club (1836). The reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III have been translated by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Baronet, Glasgow, 1907.

#### *(b) Fordun and Bower.*

*Scotichronicon*. The MSS are numerous (see Skene's edition in *Historians of Scotland*, vol. 1). (1) The complete work edited by Walter Goodall (Joannis de Fordun *Scotichronicon cum supplementis et continuatione Walteri Boweri, Insulae Sancti Columbae Abbatis: E codicibus MSS editum, cum notis et variantibus lectionibus. Praefixa est ad historiam Scottorum introductio brevis cura W. G., Edinburgi, MDCCCLIX*); (2) Fordun's part of *Scotichronicon* and *Gesta Annalia* for 1153 to 1385 were edited by Skene, W. F., in the *Historians of Scotland* (vol. 1, Latin text, with critical introduction on MSS, etc. *Johannis de Fordun*

*Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, Edinburgh, 1871; vol. iv in same series contains Historical Introduction by Skene, W. F., and translation of vol. i by Skene, F. J. H.).

### *Wyntoun.*

Eight MSS are known (see Amours's edition S.T.S., vol. II, pp. v ff.). Editions by (1) Macpherson, David (only of the part concerning Great Britain), 1795; (2) Laing, D. (*Historians of Scotland* as above, vols. II, III, IX); (3) Amours, F. J., for Scottish Text Society (vols. II, III, IV, V containing the text of books I-VIII, chap. XXIV already published).

W. A. Craigie shows (*Anglia*, xx, 1898, p. 368) that there were three recensions of Wyntoun's chronicle: (1) with seven books and ending with the accession of Robert III in 1390 (Wemyss and Harleian MSS); (2) with nine books and ending at 1408 (Royal MS, from which Macpherson's and Laing's editions are printed); (3) the 8th and 19th chapters of Book IV are rewritten, and the new matter in (2) is better fitted on to the earlier portion by recasting and omitting some lines. The best representatives of (3) are the Cottonian and First Edinburgh MSS. In the S.T.S. edition both the Wemyss and the Cottonian MSS are printed. (1) and (2) have different rubrics, and the chapters are sometimes differently divided. Craigie corrects here and in the *Scottish Review* for July 1897 some serious misstatements of Laing regarding the MSS.

## CHAPTER VI

### JOHN GOWER

#### MANUSCRIPTS.

There is good evidence, derived from the original manuscripts which we possess of Gower's works, that he had a regularly organised *scriptorium*, for the reproduction of his works under his own superintendence. As a result, the text of his books has come down to us in a remarkably correct state, though *Confessio Amantis* has suffered the usual fate of being printed from inferior manuscripts. The following copies may be regarded as having been prepared under the author's own supervision:

Mirour de l'Omme, the unique MS in the Camb. Univ. Libr. Add. 3035.

Vox Clamantis and other Latin poems: All Souls Coll. 98; Glasgow, Hunterian Museum, T. 2.17; Cotton, Tib. A. iv; and Harleian 6291.

*Confessio Amantis*: the Bodleian MS, Fairfax 3, and the so-called Stafford MS, in the possession of the Earl of Ellesmere.

The French ballades, both those on Marriage and the Cinkante Balades, together with the English poem In Praise of Peace: the MS belonging to the duke of Sutherland, which was, till lately, at Trentham Hall. Original texts of the ballades on Marriage are also found in the Fairfax, All Souls and Glasgow MSS.

Besides these original MSS, there are six copies of *Vox Clamantis*, of which two give us the text which underlies the erasures of the author's copies mentioned above; at least thirty-seven of *Confessio Amantis*, of which twenty-four give the earliest form of the text; and six of the ballades on Marriage

(*Traité pour essampler les Amantz Marietz*) Of the Cinkante Balades and the poem In Praise of Peace, no other copies are known except those found in the Trentham MS.

The original copies of *Vox Clamantis* had, at the beginning, a picture of the author with a bow in hand, shooting arrows at the globe of the world, *Ad mundum mitto mea iacula*, and this is still found in the Glasgow and Cotton MSS. The All Souls MS, which has lost this leaf, has a miniature of abp Arundel attached to the epistle addressed to him, this being, no doubt, the actual presentation copy.

*Confessio Amantis* had, originally, two miniatures, one in the prologue, of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and one near the beginning of the first book, of the confession. These are reproduced in many of the manuscripts. A few, also, of the later copies had illustrations throughout, as, for example, the New College MS 266, and the Fountaine MS, which has recently been sold.

There is a record of a translation into Portuguese of *Confessio Amantis*, made in the author's own life-time or very near it, which is represented by a prose version in Castilian existing in the library of the Escorial (g. ii. 19).

#### EDITIONS OF SEPARATE WORKS.

*Confessio Amantis* was published by Caxton in 1483. His text is a composite one, taken from at least three MSS, all rather inferior. Berthelette's edition of 1532 was printed from a copy which, in form of text, resembled MS Bodley 294, but was inferior to it in correctness: he supplied from Caxton's edition what he found wanting in his own text, and gave the two alternative forms of the introductory lines, Prol. 24-92. His text is, on the whole, decidedly better than Caxton's. In 1554, Berthelette published a second edition, a reprint of the first in different type, with a few errors corrected. The text given by Chalmers in his collection of British Poets, 1810, is that of Berthelette's second edition. Reinhold Pauli, in 1857, published a handsomely printed edition, professing to follow Berthelette's first edition, with some collation of MSS. No critical judgment, however, is shown in the selection of authorities for the text, and the result is that most of the errors of Berthelette's edition remain uncorrected, and, though the conclusion of the author's first recension is partly given (for the first time), it is left incomplete. H. Morley, 1889, followed Pauli's text with conjectural alterations of his own. His edition is imperfect, many passages being omitted.

The poem In Praise of Peace was printed in Thynne's edition of Chaucer, 1532, and reprinted in the subsequent folio editions of Chaucer, Gower being always named as the author. It has also been published by Wright, T., *Political Poems* (Rolls Series), and by Skeat, W. W., *Chaucerian and other Pieces*.

The two series of French ballades were printed in 1818 from the Trentham MS by the Roxburghe Club. An edition has also appeared in Germany in the series of *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiete der romanischen Philologie*, ed. Stengel, 1886.

The Roxburghe Club also published *Vox Clamantis*, *Cronica Tripartita* and some other Latin pieces, in 1850, edited by H. O. Coxe. This edition follows the text of the All Souls MS, the deficiencies of which are, unfortunately, supplied from the inferior Digby MS. *Cronica Tripartita* and other Latin pieces were printed in Wright's *Political Poems* (Rolls Series).

A small poem attributed in one MS, Ashmole 59, to Gower, beginning 'Pass forth, thou pilgrim,' has been printed by Kuno Meyer and Max Förster, but it is certainly not Gower's.

## COLLECTED EDITION.

An edition of the whole of Gower's works, edited by G. C. Macaulay, was published by the Clarendon Press, 1899-1902, in four volumes, of which the first contains the French, the second and third the English (these being also issued by the E.E.T.S. to its subscribers) and the fourth the Latin works, with introductions, notes and glossaries. In this edition the *Mirour de l'Omme* was printed for the first time (see also *Academy*, XLVIII, 71 and 91), and *Confessio Amantis* was, for the first time, published from a trustworthy manuscript, with sufficient collation of other copies, to display the original variations of text.

A full account of the MSS and of the condition of the text of all Gower's works is to be found in the introductions to these volumes, and reference may also be made with regard to the text of *Confessio Amantis* to Easton's *Readings in Gower*, 1895, and to the papers published in *Englische Studien*, XXVIII, 161-208, XXXII, 251-275 and XXXIV, 169-181, by H. Spies, from whom an edition is eventually to be expected.

## CRITICAL WORKS.

On the relations of the *Mirour de l'Omme* to possible French sources and also to Gower's other works, see the dissertation of Miss E. E. Fowler, *Une Source française des poèmes de Gower*, 1905; and for the connections between Chaucer's work and *Confessio Amantis* refer to L. Beck in *Anglia*, v, 313 ff., and to Lücke in *Anglia*, xiv.

For the bearing of the *Mirour de l'Omme* on the social conditions of the time, see E. Flügel in *Anglia*, xxiv, 487-508.

The language of *Confessio Amantis* has been illustrated by F. J. Child in his *Observations on the Language of Gower's Confessio Amantis*, 1868 (see also Ellis, A. J., *Early English Pronunciation*, pt. III, 726-739), by G. Tietze in his dissertation on Gower's vocabulary, Breslau, 1889 and by Fahrenberg in *Herrig's Archiv*, LXXXIX, 392 ff.; and the metre is dealt with by Schipper in his *Englische Metrik*, I, 279 ff., and by Saintsbury in his *History of English Prosody*.

For literary appreciations, see Warton's *History of English Poetry* (he was the first to call attention to the ballads); Ellis, G., *Specimens of Early English Poets*, I, 169-200; the *British Quarterly Review*, XXVII, 1; Morley, H., *English Writers*, IV, 150 ff.; Ten Brink, *History of English Literature*, II, 99-103 and 132-8. (authorised translation); Courthope's *History of English Poetry*, I, 302-320 and Ker, W. P., *Essays on Medieval Literature*, 101-134.

All the above subjects are also dealt with, more or less fully, in the introductions, notes and glossaries of Macaulay's edition.

For biography, the reader may be referred to Leland, *Script. Brit.* I, 414 f.; Thynne's *Animadversions*; Todd, *Illustrations of the lives and writings of Gower and Chaucer*, 1810; H. N. Nicolas in the *Retrospective Review*, 2nd series, II, 103-117, 1828; the introductory essay of Pauli's edition of the *Confessio Amantis*; K. Meyer's dissertation, *John Gower's Beziehungen zu Chaucer und King Richard II.*, 1889 and the biographical matter in the fourth volume of the Clarendon Press edition. For Gower's tomb, reference may be made to the preface of Berthelette's edition of *Confessio Amantis*, to Stow, *Survey of London*, p. 450 (ed. 1633), to Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments*, II, 24 and to Macaulay's edition, vol. IV, pp. xix-xxiv.

## CHAPTER VII

## CHAUCER

(Bibliography by A. C. Pauca.)

## I. MANUSCRIPTS OF CHAUCER'S WORKS.

The Chaucer Society (1868- ) has published diplomatic reprints and auto-type specimens of a great number of the Chaucerian MSS. A systematic list of these has been worked out by Koch, J., *Anglia*, iv, Anz. 112. Cf. further critical accounts by him in *Anglia*, ii, 532, iii, 179, iv, 93, vi, Anz. 80, 93, viii, Anz. 154; *Literaturbl. f. germ. u. rom. Phil.* 1882, col. 224; 1885, col. 324.

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[Speght, T.] *The workes of our ancient and lerned English poet, G. C.* newly printed. In this impression you shall find these Additions: 1. His Portraiture and Progenie shewed. 2. His Life collected. 3. Arguments to every Booke gathered. 4. Old and obscure Words explained. 5. Authors by him cited, declared. 6. Difficulties opened. 7. Two Bookes of his never before printed. Impensis G. Bishop: Londini, 1598.

— *The workes of our Ancient and learned English Poet G. C.* newly printed. To that which was done in the former Impression, thus much is now added. 1. In the life of C. many things inserted. 2. The whole worke by old copies reformed. 3. Sentences and Proverbs noted. 4. The Signification of the old and obscure words proved, also Characters, shewing from what tongue or dialect they be derived. 5. The Latine and French, not Englished by C., translated. 6. The treatise, called *Jacke Upland*, against Friars: and C.'s *A. B. C.* called, *La priere de nostre dame*, at this impression added: At Islip, London, 1602. Another edition, 1687 (to which is adjoyn'd the story of the Siege of Thebes by John Lidgate. Together with the life of C.).

[John Stow.] *The workes of G. C.* newlie printed, with divers addicions, whiche were never in print before: with the siege and destruction of the worthy citee of Thebes, compiled by J. Lidgate, monke of Berie.

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- 8-13, 16-20, 26-28, 32-36, 38-43, 50-55, 95, 96. The Harleian MS 7834 of the Cant. Tales, *ibid.* 73 (1885). Parallel-text specimens of all accessible imprinted C. MSS, *ibid.* 81, 85, 86, 90-94, 97; Autotype specimens of the chief C. MSS, *ibid.* 48, 56, 74. A temporary preface to the 'Society's' 'Six-text' edition of C.'s Canterbury Tales, Part I, by Furnivall, F. J., *ibid.* Series II, 3 (1868).
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Editions: Parallel-text edition, *C. S. Series* i, 21 (1871); One-text print, *ibid.* 24 (1871), 60 (1880); Skeat, *Minor Poems*.

Bradley, H. C. and Froissart. *Acad.* 1895, No. 1188, 125 f.

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Kläber, F. Traces of the Canticum (Hohe Lied) and of Boethius De consolatione philosophiae in C.'s Book of the Duchesse. *MLN.* xii, 338-380.

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Parallel-text edition, C. S. Series I, 57 (1878); suppl. Parallel-texts, *ibid.* 59 (1880); One-text print, *ibid.* 61 (1880), 77 (1886). Cf. Koch, *Anglia*, III, 84; *Engl. Stud.* I, 290.

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Furnivall, F. J. The Romaunt of the Rose, from Thynne's print, 1532. C. S. Series I, 82 (1890).

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Kittredge, G. L. The authorship of the English Romaunt of the Rose. *Harvard Stud. and Notes*, pp. 1-65. 1892.

Lange, J. H. Zu Fragment B des ME. Rosenromans. *Engl. Stud.* xxxi, 159-162.

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[Cf. also Bourdillon, F. W., The early editions of the Roman de la Rose, *Bibliogr. Soc.* 1906; Langlois, E., in *Petit de Julleville's Hist. de la... Litt. fr.*, I, 105 ff. *ibid.*, *Origines et Sources du Roman de la Rose*, Paris, 1890.]

## X. TROILUS AND CRISEYDE.

Early editions: Troilus was first printed by Caxton in 1482? (Brit. Mus. 11,589, no. title-page), by Wynkyn de Worde in 1517 and by Pynson in 1526. It was included in Thynne's edition of 1532, and in all subsequent editions of C.'s works.

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Hamilton, G. L. The indebtedness of C.'s Troilus and Criseyde to Guido delle Colonne's Historia Trojana. New York, 1903.

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Kittredge, G. L. Observations on the Language of C.'s Troilus. C. S. Series II, 28 (1897).

Kynaston, F. Amorum Troili et Creseidae libri duo priores Anglo-Latini. 2 parts. Oxoniae, 1635.

Macaulay, G. C. Troilus and Criseide in Prof. Skeat's edition. Acad. No. 1196, 267-9; No. 1198, 338-340.

McCormick, W. H. Specimen-Extracts from nine unprinted MSS of C.'s Troilus, with introduction on MSS, metre and grammar. C. S. Series I, 98 (1907).

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[Cf. also Dr Cino Chiarini's two articles reprinted from *La Cultura*. Eleanor P. Hammond's Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual, London and New York, 1908, and G. G. Coulton's Chaucer and his England, 1908, should now be added to the bibliography.]

## XII. CHRONOLOGY OF CHAUCER'S WORKS.

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- Tatlock, J. S. P. The development and chronology of C.'s works. *C. S. Series* II, 37 (1907).
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## XIII. LANGUAGE AND METRE.

- Cromie, H. Byme-Index to the Ellesmere MS of the *Cant. Tales*. In 8vo. *C. S. Series* I, 45, 47 (1875), in 4to, 46 (1875), Notes and Corrections, 49 (1877).
- Ellis, A. J. On Early English Pronunciation, with especial reference to Shakspeare and C. . . Including a re-arrangement of . . . F. J. Child's *Memoirs on the language of C.* Phil. Soc. 1869. Also issued by the E.E.T.S. and by the C. S.
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- Kissner, A. C. in seinen Beziehungen zur ital. Literatur. Bonn, 1867.
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Woodbridge, E. *G.'s Classicism.* *JG Ph.* i, 111-7.

[For Guillaume de Machault (1300?-1377), see P. Tarbe's edition, Reims 1849; and for the poems of Eustace Deschamps, Machault's nephew, see ed. Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire, S.A.T.F., Paris, 1878 ff.]

[For *The Tale of Gamelyn*, see ed. Skent, W. W., 2nd edn, revised, 1893; of the *Bohyn and Gandeleyne* ballad, in *Child's English and Scotch Ballads*, vol. v, 1888; Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde: Euphues golden legacie*, 1590; and Lindner, F., *Englische Studien*, ii, pp. 94 ff. and 321 ff.]

[Edwardes, M., *A summary of the Literatures of Modern Europe . . . to 1400*, 1907, and Körting's *Grundriss* may be consulted for bibliographical information. See also *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, vols. vi and vii, and 6th series, vols. viii, ix and x.]

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE ENGLISH CHAUCERIANS

## LYDGATE (chief works).

*Aesop.* Ed. by P. Sauerstein in *Anglia*, ix.

*Alban and Amphabel.* Printed by John Hertford. St Albans, 1534.

*Assembly of Gods.* Printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498 and afterwards.

Cambridge facsimile reprint of c. 1500 ed., 1906. Reprinted by Pynson, n. d., and twice by Robert Redman in 4to and 16mo, the latter dated 1540. Edited for *E.E.T.S.* by Triggs, O. L. 1896.

*Churl and the Bird, The.* Twice printed by Caxton (1st ed. reprinted in facsimile, Cambridge, 1906), twice by Wynkyn de Worde, once by Pynson. Partly in Halliwell.

*Complaint of the Black Knight.* Printed by W. de Worde. Also in editions of Chaucer from Thynne (1532) onwards till discovered to be Lydgate's by Shirley's testimony.

*Court of Sapience.* Printed by Caxton c. 1481.

*Divers ballades and shorter poems.* Also included in older edd. of Chaucer.

*Falls of Princes.* First printed by Pynson in 1494; later edd. 1527, 1554 (Tottel) and John Wayland's 1558.

*Flower of Courtesye.* Printed in edd. of Chaucer from Thynne (1532) to Chalmers.

*Guy of Warwick.* Printed in part in the *Percy Folio* by Furnivall, F. J. and Hales, J. W., 1868; completely by Zupitza, J., Vienna, 1873; and by Robinson, F. N., *Harvard Studies and Notes*, v.

- Horse, Goose and Sheep.** Twice printed by Caxton, once at least by Wynkyn de Worde. Cambridge facsimile reprint of c. 1499 ed., 1906. Reprinted partly in Halliwell, *Minor Poems* (v. *inf.*) and in Roxburghe Club edd.
- Margaret's entry into London, Verses for queen.** Not now extant.
- Minor Poems (44).** Ed. by J.-O. Halliwell for Percy Society. 1840.
- Nightingale Poems, Two.** Ed. by O. Glauning for E.E.T.S. 1900.
- Our Lady, The Life of.** Printed by Caxton (1484?). Again in 1531. Included by C. E. Tame in 2nd part of *Early English Religious Literature*. 1871-9.
- Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, The.** Printed in extract by Miss K. J. Cust after N. Hill in *The Ancient Poem of Guillaume de Guilleville . . . compared with the Pilgrim's Progress of John Bunyan*. 1858. Completely for E.E.T.S. by F. J. Furnivall and Miss K. Locock in three parts. 1899-01-04. [For Deguileville himself, see ed. Sturzinger, J. J., Roxburghe Club, 1893.]
- Reason and Sensuality.** Ed. by Sieper, E., E.E.T.S. 2 parts. 1901-3.
- St Edmund and Frenfund.** In O. Horstmann's *Altenglische Legenden. Neue Folge*. Heilbronn, 1881. No. 20.
- St Giles.** In Horstman, *ibid.* No. 19.
- St Margaret.** In Horstman, *ibid.* No. 21.
- Secreta Secretorum, or Secrets of Philosophers** (finished by Burgh). Printed for the first time by E.E.T.S. Ed. Steele, R. 1894.
- Stans Puer ad Mensam** (*Rules of Breeding*). Printed by Caxton (c. 1479?), and four (?) times by Wynkyn de Worde (n. d.? 1518 and 1524) as well as often in later manuals of behaviour. Reprinted from MS in Wright and Halliwell's *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 1845, and in Hazlitt's *Early Popular Poetry of England*, III, 1866.
- Temple of Glass.** Printed by Caxton c. 1477. Cambridge facsimile reprint, 1905. Reprinted by Wynkyn de Worde, 1498?-1500?; and twice afterwards at no great interval: by Pynson, existing only in fragments, about the same time; and by Berthelet, J. with no date. Edited with elaborate apparatus (the fullest at present existing for the study of Lydgate) by Schick, J., E.E.T.S. 1891.
- Testament.** Printed by Pynson. Reprinted in Halliwell.
- Thebes, The Story of.** Printed by W. de Worde n. d. but added by Stow to the 1561 ed. of *Chapcer* and thenceforward included in edd. of that poet to the time of Chalmers.
- Troy Book.** First printed by Pynson in 1513; secondly by R. Braham in 1555. Modernised by T. Heywood as *Life and Death of Hector* in 1614. Reprint begun by E.E.T.S. Part I, 1906, ed. Bergen, H.
- Prose. The Damage and Destruction of Realms.** Printed by Treverys c. 1520.
- Besides the editions noticed above (especially Schick's *Temple of Glass*, and Zupitza) and the portions appartenant in the various histories of English Literature, including Morley's *English Writers*, VI, consult Gray's *Motrum*, Warton, *History of English Poetry*, III (ed. Hazlitt); Ritson, *Bibliographia Poetica u.s.*; Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, I, 1895; Gregory Smith, *The Transition Period*, Edinburgh, 1900; and the present writer's *History of English Prosody*, I, 1906. See also Sidney Lee's bibliography of Lydgate in the D. of N. B., for MSS, fuller lists, etc., and also H. N. McCracken's *Lydgate Canon*, E.E.T.S. 1908, referred to below.

OCCLEVE.

No early editions except *The Letter of Cupid*, and perhaps one, or two more, in the early edd. of Chaucer.

*De Regimine Principum*. Ed. Wright, T. Roxburghe Club, 1860.

*Poems*. Ed. Mason, G. 1796.

*Tale of Jonathas*, included by W. Browne in the *Shepherds Pipe*. 1614.

*Works*. E.E.T.S. i and ii. 1892-7. Ed. Furnivall, F. J. The editorial matter of these contains the fullest information and discussion yet given as to O.; and something as to him will generally be found in the neighbourhood of notices of Lydgate, e.g. in Ten Brink, *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. ii, Eng. trans. pp. 212 ff.

BENEDICT BURGH.

*Aristotle's A B C*, in *Babees Book*, ed. Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. 1868.

*Christmas Game, A.*, in *Wright's Christmas Carols*, Percy Society, 1841 (also by Furnivall in N. and Q. 1868).

*Great and Little Cato*. Printed three times by Caxton. Facsimile reprint of 1477 ed. *princeps*. Cambridge, 1906.

*Secrets of the Philosophers* (with Lydgate); Ed. Steele, R. E.E.T.S. 1894. Part printed by Halliwell in *Lydgate's Minor Poems* and by Ashmole in *Theatrum Chemicum*.

GEORGE ASHLEY.

*Poems*. Ed. Bateson, M. E.E.T.S. 1899. MSS in Trinity College and University Libraries, Cambridge.

HENRY BRADSHAW.

*Life of St Radegund*. Printed by Pynson, n. d.

*Life of St Werburgh*. Printed by Pynson, 1521. Reprinted by Chetham Society (ed. Hawkins, E., Manchester, 1848) and E.E.T.S. (ed. Horstmann, C.), 1887.

GEORGE RIPLEY AND OTHER ALCHEMISTS.

The standard collection, not superseded yet, is *Eliah Ashmole's Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*. 1652. More than once reprinted.

OSBERN BOKENAM.

*Saints' Lives*. Ed. for Roxburghe Club (1835) and by Horstmann, C. (Heilbronn, 1883).

CHAUCERIANA.

In early edd. of Chaucer as above, more or fewer. The most important except the *Tale of Beryn* (Chaucer Society, ed. Furnivall and Stone, 1884) in the seventh and supplementary volume of W. W. Skeat's *Works of Chaucer*, Oxford, 1897.

For critical and other apparatus on the minor poetry after Decleve see edd. mentioned and the general authorities cited under Lydgate, especially Morley's *English Writers*, vi, adding, for the Chauceriana, the passages appurtenant in edd. of Chaucer and books on him. The most important monograph is that on *The Origin and Sources of the 'Court of Love,'* by W. A. Neilson, Harvard, 1899.

[For Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*, found in Chaucer edd. from Thynne onwards, see Bradley, H., *Athenaeum*, 6 February 1897, and in *Engl. Stud.* cxiii, 437; and Skeat, W. W., *Chaucerian and other pieces*, 1897.]

Since the chapter on the Chaucerians was printed and the above bibliography was composed, the long desired revision of Bitson's list of Lydgate's works has appeared in the form of a lecture to the Philological Society by Henry Noble McCracken. This introduces important variations in the canon, such formerly accepted works as *London Lickpenny* being, for instance, excluded. The list must henceforward be taken into serious account by all Lydgate students. Its author puts it forth in no dictatorial manner. But, as it proceeds on the premiss that 'Lydgate was always smooth,' imposes arbitrary rime tests and disqualifies such positive testimony as that of Hawes to his master's work, it is evident that there must be room for considerable difference of opinion as to the probable correctness of this revision.

## CHAPTER IX

## STEPHEN HAWES

## EDITIONS.

- ¶ Here begynneth the boke called the example of vertu. [Wynkyn de Worde, 1512.]
- ¶ Here foloweth a compendyous story, and it is called the exemple of vertu, in the whiche ye shall fynde many goodly storys & naturall dysputacyons bytwene four ladyes named Hardynes, Sapience, Fortune, and Nature. Compyled by Stephyn Hawys one of ye gromes of the most honorable chambre of oure souerayne lorde kyng Henry the .vii. And pryted .xx. day of Apryll. Anno dñi. m.ccccc.xxx. [Wynkyn de Worde.]
- The Passetyme of Pleasure, or the History of Graunde Amoure and la Bel Pucel, containing the Knowledge of the Seven Sciences and the Course of Mans Life in this Worlde. [Wynkyn de Worde, 1509.]
- The History of Graund Amoure and La Bel Pucell, called The Pastime of Pleasure, Conteynyng the Knowledge of the Seven Sciences, and the Course of Mans Life in this Worlde. Invented by Stephen Hawes, Grome of Kyng Henry the Seventh his chamber. Anno Domini, 1555. [Richard Tottel.]
- The Pastime of Pleasure: An Allegorical Poem. Reprinted from the edition of 1555. Ed. Wright, Thomas. Percy Society. 1845.
- The couercyon of swerers (on a riband). [Wynkyn de Worde, 1509.]
- ¶ A Ioyfull medytacyon to all Englonde of the coronacyon of our moost naturall souerayne lorde kyng Henry the eight. [Wynkyn de Worde, n.d.]
- The Conversyon of Swerers: A Joyfull Medytacyon to all Englonde of the Coronacyon of Kyng Henry the Eyght. Ed. Laing, David. Abbotsford Club. Edinburgh, 1865.
- Comfort of Louers. Emprynted by me Wynkyn de Worde. [n.d.]

## ILLUSTRATIVE WORKS.

- Ba'e, John. *Illustrum Maioris Britanniae Scriptorum Catalogus*. . 1 vol. Basileae. Apud Joannem Oporinum. 1557-9. The 1548 edition of Bale does not mention Hawes.
- Browning, E. B. *The Greek Christian Poets, and the English Poets*. 1863.
- Minto, W. *Characteristics of English Poets*. Edinburgh and London. 1874, 1885.

- Morley, Henry. *English Writers*. Vol. VII. 1891.
- Saunders, G. *Flourishing of Romance and Rise of Allegory*. Edinburgh and London. 1897.
- *A History of English Prosody*. Vol. 1. 1906.
- Schick, J. *Introduction to Lydgate's Temple of Glas*. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LX. 1891.
- Ten Brink, B. *History of English Literature*. Vol. III. Eng. trans. 1896.
- Warton, T. *The History of English Poetry*. 3 vols. 1774-81. Ed. Haalitt, W. Carew. 4 vols. 1871.
- Wood, Anthony. *Athenae Oxonienses*. 2 vols. 1691-2. Ed. Bliss, P. 4 vols. 1813-20.
- [For the note on p. 224 of the text, thanks are due to Percy Lubbock, of Magdalene College.]
- [For Bernard Andreas or André, of Toulouse, see Gairdner, J., *Memorials of Henry VII*, Rolls Series, 1858.]

## CHAPTER X

## THE SCOTTISH CHAUCERIANS

*General Authorities.*

- Chambers's *Cyclopaedia of English Literature*. 1901.
- Courthope, W. J. *History of English Poetry*. Vol. 1. 1895.
- Henderson, T. F. *Scottish Vernacular Literature*. 1898.
- Jusserand, J. J. *A Literary History of the English People*. Vols. I and II. 1895, 1906.
- Millar, J. H. *A Literary History of Scotland*. 1903.
- Morley, Henry. *English Writers*. Vols. VI and VII. 1890, 1891.
- Smith, G. Gregory. *The Transition Period*. 1900.
- (For references to Sibbald, Irving and other authorities, see under each author, *infra*).

## JAMES I, KING OF SCOTS.

(1) *The Kingis Quair*.

- MS.* Only extant MS, Bodleian, Oxford (Arch. Selden, B. 24, foll. 192-211). Date of MS, after 1488.
- Editions.* *Poetical Remains of James the First, King of Scotland*. Edinburgh, 1783. This anonymous volume was edited by William Tytler (father of Lord Woodhouselee). The poem, which is described as having been 'never before published' was printed from an indifferent transcript. The *Works of James I, King of Scotland*, containing the *Kingis Quhair* (sic: see note *infra*), *Christis Kirk of the Grene*, and *Pebelis to the Play*. Perth, 1786. This is one of B. Morison's publications. It follows Tytler's very closely.
- Chalmers, George, included the poem in his *Poetic Remains of the Scottish Kings*, 1824. A worthless text.
- Sibbald, J., in his *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, 1802, printed 160 of the 197 stanzas (1, pp. 14-54).

Skeat, W. W. *The Kingis Quair, together with A Ballad of Good Counsel. By King James I of Scotland.* Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1884. This edition supersedes all the others. Skeat had published previously, in 1871, in the first edition of his *Specimens of English Literature from 1394 to 1579*, stanzas 152-173 of the poem.

Thomson, Ebenezer. *The King's Quair, a poem, by James, K. of Scots.* (First edition. Ayr, 1815). Second edition. Ayr, 1824.

[It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to remind the reader of D. G. Rossetti's *The King's Tragedy*.]

*Critical* (including the question of James I's authorship).

Brown, J. T. T. *The Authorship of the Kingis Quair. A New Criticism.* Glasgow, 1896. An attempt to disprove James I's authorship.

Irving, D. *History of Scottish Poetry*, 1861, pp. 123-160.

Jussérand, J. J. *Jacques I<sup>er</sup> d'Écosse fut-il poète? Étude sur l'authenticité du Cahier du Roi.* Paris, 1897. A reprint of an article in *La Revue historique*, 1897, vol. LXIV—a complete answer to Brown's criticism.

— *The Romance of a King's Life.* 1896. An English version of an article in *La Revue de Paris*, Feb. 1894, pp. 172-199.

Neilson, W. A. *The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love* (Harvard Studies), 1899, pp. 152 *et seq.*, 233 *et seq.*

Ross, John M. *Scottish History and Literature*, 1884, pp. 132-159.

Skeat, W. W. *Chaucerian and other Pieces*, 1897, p. lxxv. (Oxford Chaucer, vol. VII.)

— *Introduction to text, u.s.*

Wischmann, Waither. *Untersuchungen über das Kingis Quair Jakobs I von Schottland.* Wismar, 1887.

NOTE. The confusion of *quhair* (*where*) with *quair* (*quire*, book) in references to the title of James I's poem is unfortunately too common. Cf. Morison's edition, *u.s.*, and Ross's account of the poem, *u.s.* The frequency of *quh-* in Middle Scots sometimes caused error even in contemporary texts: e.g. *quhod* for *quod*, which occurs once in Lyndsay's *Dreme* (St Andrews, 1554).

Reference has been made (p. 92, note 1) to the stronger southern character of the texts of the Early Transition period. Consideration of this fact may have suggested the ingenious speculation that the *Kingis Quair* was written by James I in the southern dialect and that the text which we have is a copy by a northern scribe. James's authorship is not disputed, but there would seem to be some question of the historical value of the conclusions regarding the mixed character of the language. The theory assumes that James, having been captured at an early age, and having spent many years in England, must have forgotten his native speech. Against this we place Bower's statement respecting the king's companions in exile (see also Jussérand, Jacques I<sup>er</sup> etc., *u.s.*, pp. 16 *et seq.*) and the assumption—not less reasonable than the other—that in circumstances such as James's, the once familiar speech would not be entirely forgotten, and that it would act as a disturbing factor in his efforts to reproduce *literary* English. Further, it is hard to believe that a Scottish scribe, bent on transforming the text, would, or could make any changes in word or rime except in accordance with Scots usage. (Note the evidence of 'lakketh,' st. 27; 'stynten,' st. 117; 'regne'—'benigne,' st. 37; and the northern rimes generally.)

*Other Poems by, or ascribed to, James I.*

(ii) 'Sen trew Vertew encreaseis dignyte,' sometimes entitled *Good Counsel*. MS. In Cambridge University Library (Kk. 1. 5, fol. 5).

*Editions.* In the 1578, 1600, and 1621 issues (not in that of 1567) of *Ane Compendious Buik of Godly and Spirituall Songis* [known as *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*].

Laing, D. Reprint of the 1578 edition of the above. Edinburgh, 1868.

Lumby, J. B. *Ratis Raving and other Moral and Religious Pieces in Prose and Verse*, E.E.T.S. 1870, pp. vi, 10, 118-119.

Mitchell, A. F. *A Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs*. Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1897, pp. lxxi, 238.

Skeat, W. W. *Kingis Quair*, etc., *u.s.*, pp. 51-54, 94-96.

(iii) *Pebilis to the Play*, and (iv) *Christis Kirk on the Grene*. For discussion of the authorship of these pieces see Irving, *u.s.*, pp. 142-153; Skeat, K. Q., *u.s.*, pp. xvii-xxiii; Brown, J. T. T., *u.s.*, pp. 16-20. See also chapter xi of this volume.

(v) Fragment B of the *Romaunt of the Rose* (ll. 1706-5810) printed in the *Oxford Chaucer*, I, pp. 164-229. For Skeat's reasons for suggesting the ascription of this section to James I see the introduction, pp. 3-6; also his *Chaucer Canon*, Oxford, 1900, pp. 75-89. Cf. also *Athenaeum*, 22 July 1899.

## ROBERT HENRYSON.

(i) *The Morall Fabillis of Esope.*

*MSS.* Harleian MS 3865, Brit. Mus., with title-page, bearing the date 1571. (This MS, containing the general prologue and thirteen Fables, is the most complete.) Bannatyne MS (1568), Advocates' Library, Edinburgh (MS 1. 1. 6), containing the general prologue and ten Fables. Makculloch MS (c. 1500) in the Library of the University of Edinburgh (Laing MSS, No. 149), containing the general prologue and the Fable of the Cock and the Jewel. Asloan MS (early sixteenth century), containing the Fable of the Two Mice.

*Editions.* *The Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian, Compyllit in Eloquent, and Ornate Scottis Meter, be Maister Robert Henrysone, Scholemaister of Dunfermeling. . . . Newlie Imprintit at Edinburgh, be Robert Lekpreuik, at the Expensis of Henrie Charteris: and ar to be sauld in his Buith, on the North syde of the gait, abone the Throne.* Anno. Do. m.d.lxx. A unique copy of this edition is preserved in the library at Britwell Court, Bucks.

*The Fabulous tales of Esope the Phrygian, Compiled moste eloquently in Scottishe Metre by Master Robert Henryson, and now lately Englished* . . . . London. Richard Smith Anno. 1577. The only known copy of this edition was in the library of Sion College (E.B. ix, 30); but it is now missing (see S.T.S. edition, *infra*, II, pp. xi-xvi).

The next extant edition is that ('Newlie revised and corrected') of Andrew Hart, Edinburgh, 1621, reprinted by the Maitland Club, Edinburgh, 1832, with an unsigned preface by David Irving.

Laing, D. *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson*, now first collected. With Notes, and a Memoir of his Life. Edinburgh, 1865. The Fables are printed on pp. 101-217.

Diebler, A. B. *Henrysone's Fabeln* (a reprint of the Harleian MS text), in *Anglia*, ix, 342-390, 453-492.

Smith, G. Gregory. *The Poems of Robert Henryson*. Vol. II. Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1906. This edition prints all the texts of the *Fables in extenso*, and gives a complete bibliography. See also *Specimens of Middle Scots*, 1902, pp. 1-7 and 267-9.

(ii) *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

*MSS.* Asloan MS, u.s. Bannatyne, MS u.s.

*Editions.* Among the fragments of the Chepman and Myllar prints (the earliest specimens of Scottish printing) preserved in the unique volume in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh (19. 1. 16). The text is incomplete. A reprint (now rare) was issued by Laing in 1827.

Laing, D. *Poems*, u.s., pp. 49-71.

(iii) *The Testament of Cresseid*.

*MS.\** It appears in the Table of the Asloan MS, u.s., but the leaves on which it was written have been lost.

*Editions.* In William Thynne's edition of Chaucer. 1532.

The Testament of | Cresseid, | Compylit be M. Robert | Henrysone, Sculemai-  
ster in Dunfer- | meling. || Imprintit at Edin- | burgh be Henrie Charteris. |  
M.D.XCIII. This is the earliest known separate edition, and the first printed in Scotland. A unique copy is preserved in the British Museum.

Chalmers, G. Reprint of the foregoing for the Bannatyne Club. 1825.

Laing, D. *Poems*, u.s., pp. 75-99.

Skeat, W. W. *Chaucerian and other Pieces* (Oxford Chaucer, vol. VII), 1897, pp. 327-346. This text is based on Chalmers's reprint, No. 3, *supra*.

For observations on early seventeenth century Scottish editions, of which no copies are extant, see Laing, u.s., p. 259. In 1635 Sir Francis Kynaston made a Latin rimed version of Chaucer's *Troilus* and Henryson's *Cresseid*—*Amorum Troilli et Cressidae Libri duo priores, Anglico-Latini, Oxoniae, excudebat Iohannes Lichfield, anno domini 1635*. F. G. Waldron printed a specimen of the MS in 1796. The MS was formerly in the possession of S. W. Singer. See Laing, u.s., p. 260.

(iv) *Shorter Poems (thirteen in number)*.

*MSS.* Twelve of the poems are preserved in the Bannatyne MS, u.s., and five are in duplicate, in the first draft, bound up with the MS. Four are in the Maitland Folio MS (Pepysian Library, Magd. Coll., Cambridge). One, and a fragment of another, are in the Macculloch MS, u.s.; one is in the Gray MS, Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, and one is in the later Riddell MS (1636), preserved in the library of Mr Chalmers of Auldbar.

*Editions.* Two poems (Prais of Aige and Want of Wyse Men) were printed by Chepman and Myllar, u.s. Several of the poems have been reprinted at various times (by Ramsay, Hailes, Sibbald, Pinkerton, Chalmers and others); but the first collected text appeared in Laing, *Poems*, u.s., 1865. Robene and Makyne has been reprinted most often, the latest version (following the Bannatyne text) appearing in *Specimens of Middle Scots*, Edin. 1902, pp. 21-25.

*Collected Editions.*

The only collected editions of Henryson's poems are (1) Laing, u.s., 1865 and (2) Smith, G. Gregory, Scottish Text Society, in three volumes, in course of publication. Vol. II (vol. I of the texts), containing the *Fables*, was published in Nov. 1906. Vol. III will contain all the texts of Nos. II, III and IV.

*Critical (general).*

- Diebler, A. R. *Henrison's Fabeldichtungen*. Halle, 1885.  
 Henley, W. E., in *Ward's English Poets*, 1887, i, pp. 137-139.  
 Irving, D., *u.s.*, 1861, pp. 208-224.  
 Laing, D., *Poems, u.s.*, 1865, introduction.  
 Morley, H. *English Writers*, 1890, vi, pp. 250-257.  
 Neilson, W. A. *The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love (Harvard Studies)*, 1899, pp. 2, 93, 159-163.  
 Ross, J. M., *u.s.*, 1884, pp. 159-169.  
 Saintsbury, G. *History of English Prosody*, 1906, i, pp. 271 *et seq.*  
 Sibbald, J., *u.s.*, 1802, i, pp. 87-90.

## WILLIAM DUNBAR.

*MSS.* There is no single MS collection of Dunbar's poems. They have been gathered together from the following (1) The Bannatyne MS, *u.s.* (60 poems); (2) The Maitland Folio MS, *u.s.* (60 poems and one fragment); (3) The Asloan MS, *u.s.* (5 poems and 2 fragments); (4) The Makeculloch MS, *u.s.* (2 poems); (5), (6), (7) MSS in the British Museum, viz. Cotton. Vitellius A. xvi, fol. 200 (1 poem), Arundel, No. 285, fol. 161 (3 poems) and App. to Royal MSS, No. 58, fol. 15 b (1 poem); (8) The Aberdeen Register of Sasines (1 poem); (9) The Reidpath MS, Univ. Lib. Cambridge, MS Moore, Ll. 5. 10, 1620 (44 poems and 3 fragments).

The distribution of the poems among these MSS is shown in tabular form in the Scottish Text Society's edition (*infra*), i, pp. exvii-exviii. See also introduction to Schipper's edition (*infra*), pp. 5-14. The former edition ascribes 101 poems to Dunbar; the latter 103. Many of the poems occur in more than one MS. Thus of the 47 poems represented in the Reidpath MS only nine (eight, Schipper) are not found in any of the other MSS. The lists include the poems which have been attributed to Dunbar.

*Editions.* (a) Chief reprints of the poems before the publication of the first collected edition by Laing (*infra*).

- Chepman and Myllar's prints, *u.s.* (7 poems.)  
 Hailes, Lord. *Ancient Scottish Poems*. Edin. 1770. (32 poems from the Bannatyne MS.)  
 Pinkerton, John. *Ancient Scottish Poems*. 2 vols. 1786. (23 poems.)  
 Ramsay, Allan. *The Ever Green*. Edin. 1724. (24 poems, freely rendered.)  
 Select Poems of Will. Dunbar. Pt. i. (Morrison's Perth edition), 1788.  
 Sibbald, J. *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*. Vols. i and ii. 1802. (45 poems.)

## (b) Collected editions.

- Laing, D. *The Poetical Works of William Dunbar, with a Memoir and Notes*. 2 vols. Edin. 1824. A supplementary volume published in 1865 contains a selection of poems by the minor Makars.  
 Schipper, J. *The Poems of William Dunbar, edited with Introductions, Various Readings and Notes*. Vienna (Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften), 1894. A useful edition, but marred by misprints.  
 Small—Mackay—Gregor. *The Poems of William Dunbar*. 3 vols. Scottish Text Society. 1884-93. (Vol. i, Introduction by Æ. J. G. Mackay; vol. ii, Texts edited by John Small; vol. iii, Notes and Glossary by Walter Gregor, with an Appendix by Æ. J. G. Mackay.) This is still the standard edition.

*Critical (general).*

- Irving, D., *u.s.*, 1861, pp. 225-254.

Kaufmann, J. *Traité de la langue du poète écossais William Dunbar*, précédé d'une esquisse de sa vie et de ses poèmes. Bonn, 1873.

Laing, D., *u.s.*, 1824, introduction.

Mackay, A. J. G. Introduction to Scottish Text Society's edition (*supra*), separate issue (privately printed). 1893.

Neilson, W. A. Origins and sources, *u.s.*, 1899, pp. 2, 163-165, 212, 220 *et seq.*

Boes, J. M., *u.s.*, 1884, pp. 169 *et seq.*

Schipper, J. William Dunbar. Sein Leben und seine Gedichte. Berlin, 1884.

Sibbald, J., *u.s.*, 1802, i, pp. 209 *et seq.*

Warton, *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, sect. xxx.

### *Versification.*

Baldon, H. B. *Dissertation on the Rimes of Dunbar*. (Freiburg.) Reprinted Edin. 1899.

McNeill, G. P. Note on the versification and Metres of Dunbar. Scottish Text Society's edition, *u.s.*, i, pp. clxxii-cxxiii.

Saintsbury, G. *History of English Prosody*. Vol. i. 1906.

Schipper, J. *Altenglische Metrik*. Bonn, 1882-1888 *passim*.

GAVIN DOUGLAS.

### *The Palice of Honour.*

*MS.* None extant.

*Editions.* A reference in the Edinburgh edition of 1579 (*infra*) to 'the copyis set furth of auld atungis ourselfis' has received confirmation by the discovery of two fragments of an unknown edition (reproduced by Small, *infra*, i, p. clxx), which Laing has dated c. 1540, and accredited to an Edinburgh press.

The | Palis of | Honour Compyled by | Gawyne dowglas Bys- | shope of  
Dunkyll. | Imprinted at London in' fletstret, at the sygne of | the Rose  
garland by | Wylliam | Copland | God saue Quene Marye. N.d.,  
(probably 1553).

Heir beginnis | ane treatise callit the Palice | of Honovr compylit | be M.  
Gawine Dowglas | Bischop of | Dunkeld. | Imprentit at Edin- | burgh be  
Iohne Ros | for Henrie Charteris. Anno 1579. Ovm privilegio regali.

Reprint of the 1579 edition, together with the Prologues to Douglas's translation of the *Aeneid*, in Morison's Perth edition of Scottish Poets. 1787.

Reprint of the 1579 edition for the Bannatyne Club. 1827.

Pinkerton, J. Reprint of the 1579 edition in Scottish Poems, reprinted from scarce editions. Vol. i. 1792.

Sibbald, J. *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, 1802, i, pp. 385-423 (incomplete).

Small, J., *infra*, i, pp. 1-81.

### *King Hart.*

*MS.* In Folio Maitland MS (Pepysian Library, Magd. Coll., Cambridge) *u.s.*

### *Editions.*

Pinkerton, John. *Ancient Scottish Poems*, 1786, i, pp. 3-43. In this edition Pinkerton divided, unwarrantably, the poem into two cantos, the first of 53 stanzas, the second of 67.

Small, J., *infra*, i, pp. 83-120.

Smith, G. Gregory, in *Specimens of Middle Scots*, 1902, pp. 49-64 (stanzas 1-53).

Exerpts are printed by Eyre-Todd in the *Abbotsford Series*, 1892, i, pp. 237-243.

### *Conscience.*

*MS.* In Folio Maitland MS, *u.s.*, foll. 192-3.

*Edition.* of Small, J., *infra*, i, pp. 121-122 (misprinted 124).

Translation of the *Aeneid*.

**MSS.** In the library of Trin. Coll., Cambridge (Gale's MSS, O. 3. 12) c. 1525. In the library of the University of Edinburgh, known as the Elphinstoun MS, c. 1525. Another in the same library, known as the Ruthven MS, c. 1535. In the library of Lambeth Palace, dated Feb. 1545 (1546). In the library of the Marquis of Bath at Longleat, dated 1547.

*Editions.*

The *xiii* Bukes of Eneados of the famous Poete Virgill Translatet out of Latyne verses into Scottissh me-*tir*, bi the Reuerend Fa-*ther* in God, May-*ster* Gawin Douglas Bishop of Dunkel & *vnkil* to the Erie of Angus. Enery buke hauing hys *perticular* Prologe. Imprinted at Londõ 1553. The printer was W. Copland, *u.s.*

Virgil's *Aeneis* translated into Scottissh verse by the famous Gawin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld. A new edition. Wherein the many errors of the forinere are corrected, and the defects supplied from an excellent manuscript. To which is added a large glossary... And to the whole is prefixed an exact account of the Author's *Life* and *Writings*. Edinburgh. Andrew Symson and Robert Fraebairn MDCCX. The responsible editor was Thomas Ruddiman; the *Life* is by bishop John Sage. The MS referred to is the Ruthven, *u.s.*, which did not come to Ruddiman's notice before 45 pages of the folio were in type. John Urry (see the bibliography to the chapter on Chaucer) gave some assistance. He appears to have collated a portion of the Bath MS with the edition of 1553 for Ruddiman's volume. Jamieson was largely indebted to the glossary in the preparation of his Scottish Dictionary (1st edition, 1808).

The *Aeneid* of Virgil, translated into Scottissh verse. Bannatyne Club. 2 vols. 1839. This edition is a handsome reprint of the Cambridge MS (*supra*), without prolegomena or notes.

Small, J. (*ut infra*). 1874. Vols. V, III and IV. This edition is based on the Elphinstoun MS (*supra*).

Some of the Prologues have been printed separately:

Nos. IV, VII, VIII and XII, and a portion of XIII in Sibbald's *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, 1802, i, pp. 423-457.

Nos. VII, XII and XIII in Eyre Todd's *Abbotsford Series*, i, pp. 249-269 (reprinted from Small).

Nos. VII and XII in Hand Browne's *Selections from the Early Scottish Poets*. Baltimore, 1896, pp. 154-165 (reprinted from Small).

Nos. I and VII in Gregory Smith's *Specimens of Middle Scots*, 1902, pp. 107-128 (from the Elphinstoun MS, collated with the Ruthven MS).

Douglas's Prologues attracted students in England in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Cf. Francis Fawkes, *Original Poems and Translations*, 1761; T. Warton, who prints the greater portion of No. XII in his *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, III.

*Collected Edition.*

The only collected edition is *The Poetical Works of Gavin Douglas*, Bishop of Dunkeld, with *Memoir, Notes, and Glossary* by John Small, M.A., F.S.A. Scot., 4 vols., Edinburgh, 1874. (Vol. I, Introduction, etc., The Palace of Honour, King Hart and Conscience. Vols. II-IV, The *Aeneid* and Glossary.)

*Critical (general).*

Irving, D., *u.s.*, 1861, pp. 255-290.

Lang, A. In *Ward's Eng. Poets*, 1887, I, pp. 159-162.

Lange, P. *Chaucer's Einfluss auf die Originaldichtungen des Schotten Gavin Douglas*. Diss. Halle, 1882.

Neilson, W. A. *Origins and Sources, u.s.*, 1899, pp. 77, 102, 160-163, 274.

Ross, J. M., *u.s.*, 1884, pp. 293-374.

Sibbald, J., *u.s.*, 1802.

Warton, *u.s.*, section xxxl.

## CHAPTER XI

THE MIDDLE SCOTS ANTHOLOGIES: ANONYMOUS  
VERSE AND EARLY PROSE

## THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS.

*A. Major.*

i. The Asloan MS, written c. 1515 by John Asloan, formerly in the possession of the Boswell family at Auchinleck, but since 1882 in that of R. W. Talbot, now Lord Talbot de Malahide. Inedited, though extracts have been printed at various times.

ii. The Bannatyne MS, written in 1568 by George Bannatyne, now in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh (MS i. i. 6). Printed, in its entirety, by the Hunterian Club (1873-1902). See the introduction there, also Memorials of George Bannatyne (Bann. Club, 1829).

iii. The Maitland Folio MS, compiled c. 1580 by Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington, Lord Privy Seal of Scotland, preserved in the Pepysian collection in the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Inedited, though extracts have been printed at various times.

iv. The Maitland Quarto MS, written by Sir Richard's daughter Marie, in 1586, containing 42 pieces from the folio MS, also preserved in the Pepysian collection. Unprinted.

*B. Minor.*

v. The Makeculloch MS, a collection of lecture-notes in Latin by Magnus Makeculloch at Louvain in 1477, now in the Laing collection of MSS in the library of the University of Edinburgh. The Scots pieces are written on fly-leaves and blank pages throughout the MS.

vi. The Gray MS, written c. 1500 by James Gray, notary public and priest of the diocese of Dunblane, now in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh (MS 34. 7. 3). The Scots pieces are interpolated throughout the MS.

## EARLY PRINTS.

Chepman and Mykay's Prints, printed in 1508 by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar, preserved in a unique volume in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. The collection (20 pieces) was reproduced in facsimile by David Laing in 1827, but copies are extremely scarce.

NOTE. For a more detailed account of the above collections see the bibliography in G. Gregory Smith's *Specimens of Middle Scots*, pp. lxxi-lxxv. An early account of the Maitland Folio and Quarto MSS will be found in Pinkerton's *Ancient Scottish Poems*, 1786, II, pp. 437-471.

EDITIONS (Selections).

- Hailes, Lord. *Ancient Scottish Poems*. Published from the MS of George Bannatyne, MDLXVIII. Edinburgh, 1770.
- Laing, David. *Select Remains of the Ancient Popular and Romance Poetry of Scotland*. Re-edited by John Small. Edinburgh, 1885.
- — *Early Scottish Metrical Tales*. New edition. Edinburgh, 1889.
- Pinkerton, John. *Ancient Scottish Poems, never before in Print*. But now published from the MS Collections of Sir Richard Maitland.... 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1786.
- Sibbald, J. *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*. 4 vols. Edinburgh, 1802.
- Smith, G. Gregory. *Specimens of Middle Scots*. Edinburgh, 1902.

NOTE. The earliest reprint is Allan Ramsay's *The Evergreen*, being a Collection of Scots Poems, wrote by the Ingenious before 1600, 2 vols., 1724. The volumes are of the highest importance to the study of the later vernacular revival, but they make no pretence to textual accuracy.

REPRINTS OF EARLY PROSE TEXTS.

- Abacuk Byaset. Inedited. See extract in *Specimens, u.s.*, pp. 239-241, 315.
- Chepman and Myllar, *u.s.* See *Specimens, u.s.*, p. 70.
- Craft of Deyng, etc. Ed. Lumby (see note on p. 284).
- Gau's Rich, Vay. Ed. Mitchell, A. F. S.T.S. 1888.
- Gilbert of the Haye's *Prose Manuscript* (A.D. 1456). Vol. I. *The Buke of the Law of Armys, or Buke of Bataillis*. Ed. J. H. Stevenson. S.T.S. 1901. See *Specimens of Middle Scots, u.s.*, pp. 77-91, 293-4.
- John of Ireland. Text not yet printed. See extracts in *Specimens, u.s.*, pp. 92-101, 294.
- Murdoch Nisbet. *The New Testament in Scots* (c. 1520). Ed. T. Graves. Law. S.T.S. 3 vols. 1901-5. See *Specimens*, pp. 101-6, 294-5.
- Schort Memorials, The. Ed. Thomas Thomson. 1827.
- Spectakle of Luf, The. Ed. Laing, *Bannatyne Miscellany*, II. See *Specimens, u.s.*, pp. 17-20.

[For other prose works referred to at the conclusion of the chapter, see volume III of the present work.]

CHAPTER XII

ENGLISH PROSE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. I

PECOCK. FORTESCUE. THE PASTON LETTERS.

- Edward, duke of York. *The Master of Game*. Ed. Baillie-Grohmann, W. A. and F. 1904. Privately printed.

CAPGRAVE.

*Works and Critical Accounts.*

- *Chronicle of England*. Ed. Hingeston, F. C. *Rolls Series*. 1858.
- *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*. Ed. Hingeston, F. C. *Rolls Series*. 1858.
- Also translation, *Book of the Illustrious Henries*. Ed. Hingeston, F. C. *Rolls Series*. 1858.
- *Nova Legenda Angliae*. MSS in York Minster library, etc. printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1516. [Of the earlier writings of Goscelin (*fl.* 1099), an industrious collector of materials for saints' lives. *Hist. Litt. de France*, VIII.]

St Katharine, Life of. Ed. Eorstmann, C. Forewords by Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. 1893.

Leland. De Scriptoribus Britannicis, *sub nom.* for Latin Works.

Tanner. Bibliotheca Brit.-Hibernica. (See also D. of N. B. for MSS, etc.)

Ten Brink, B. Hist. Eng. Lit. Vol. III, pp. 17 ff. 1902.

Capgrave's Lives of St Augustine (of Hippo) and St Gilbert 'of Sempringham,' 1451, are extant in a MS believed to be holograph. Brit. Mus. Add. MS 36,704. The former he was begged by a noble gentlewoman to write for her, 'pat is to sey to translate hir treuly'; the latter was 'translat in the same forme,' 'sane sufa addiciones,' at the prayer of Nicholas Beysby, Master of the order of St Gilbert of S., and designed for the anchoresses of that order. It is dated 1451, by 'J. C. amonge doctouris lest,' and is mainly a string of St Gilbert's miracles. Neither of the Latin originals is now known. The style is clear, somewhat more colloquial than that of the Annals and less compressed; duplicates are few, e.g. 'the grave or else the sepulture' of St G. Spelling is remarkably consistent. Capgrave appends a translated summary of his sermon on the various Augustinian orders, preached in Cambridge, 1422, but revised later, for Beysby and others who wished to know 'diffusely' of the subject. See New Palaeographical Society's Publications, Part III (1905), with facsimile. The two lives are being edited for the E.E.T.S. by J. J. Munro, together with portions of Capgrave's Life of St Norbert, in verse, the holograph MS of which is in the Phillips collection.

#### PECOCK.

##### A. Works (printed).

The Book of Faith. Ed. Morrison, J. L. Glasgow, 1909. (From Trinity Coll. Camb. MS.) Second part and summary of first part, ed. Wharton, Hy. Blackletter. 1688.

The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy. Ed. Babington, C. 2 vols. Rolls Series. 1860. With introduction and bibliography. The standard work on the whole subject of Pecoek and his works.

##### B. Works (in MS only).

The Donet. Bodleian Library, No. 916. Also a transcript, James MSS in Bodleian, No. 14.

The Follower to the Donet. Brit. Mus. Bibl. Reg. 17 D. ix.

The Poor Men's Mirror, or Outdraught of the Donet. In the Library of Lord Amherst of Hackney, formerly in Tennison's. Excerpts by Wharton, Hy., in Lambeth MSS, No. 594.

The Reule of Cristen Religioun. Phillips collection.

(For list of lost works see Babington, Introd. to Repressor.)

##### C. Contemporary Accounts.

An English Chronicle, (Cronyculys of England.) Ed. Gairdner, J., in Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles. Camden Soc. *sub an.* 1457, for trial and abjuration. Full account, copied by Stow, Annals, and from Stow by Holinshed.

Chronicle of the Grey Friars. In Monumenta Franciscana. Vol. II, Ed. Howlett. Rolls Series. 1882. *sub an.* 1457, for Pecoek's abjuration. See also Wilkins, Concilia, vol. III, p. 576.

Gascoigne, Thomas. Liber Veritatum. 'MS in Lincoln College, Oxford. Extracts in 'Gascoigne's Loci e Libro Veritatum.' Ed. Rogers, J. E. P. Oxford, 1881. Contains much information by a bitter enemy.'

Historical MSS Commission. 12th Report, Appendix, Part ix (1891), pp. 385, 584.

Rolls of Parliament. Vol. v, p. 279.

Whethamstede, Registrum Abbat. Johannis. Ed. Riley, H. T. 2 vols. Rolls Series. 1872-3. Also, but less correct, in T. Hearne's Duo Rerum Anglicanarum Scriptores Veteres, 1732, vol. II. The view of a bitter enemy.

*D. Works of Reference.*

(Leland, Comment. de Scriptoribus; Foxe, Comment. Rerum; and Wharton, Hist. Angl. Ecclesia are erroneous.)

Bale, J. Illustrium majoris Britanniae scriptorum summarium. Ed. Poole and Bateson. Anecdota Oxon. Med. and Mod. Ser. 4. Pt. ix. Oxford, 1902.

Baronius Annales Eccles. vol. xxix (i.e. Raynaldus, vol. x), *sub an.* 1459, for Pius II's condemnation.

Le Névé. Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae. Ed. Hardy, T. D. Oxford, 1854. Vol. i, p. 71, St Asaph; p. 247, Chichester. For references to records for promotion, etc.

Tanner, T. Bibl. Britan. Hibern. Good references. Also *sub* 'Regnum' for Gascoigne.

Wharton, H. Hist. Episc. London. Assensensia. 1540. Has useful references.

*E. Modern Accounts.*

Hook, W. F. Lives of Archbishops of Canterbury. *sub* Stafford and Bouchier for Peacock's ultramontane attitude, and Sermon.

Lewis, John. Life of the Learned and Right Reverend Reynold Peacock, S.T.P. Oxford, 1820. Also in same author's Life of Wyclif, 1820. Full. Useful extracts, based on Waterland.

Waterland, D. Works. Ed. van Mildert. Oxford, 1856. Vol. vi (Letters to Lewis). Extracts and bibliography in notes. See also ed. 1828, vol. x.

Wood, Anthony. Ed. Gutch, J. Hist. and Antiquities (Annals) of University of Oxford. *sub an.* 1457. Oxford, 1780-96.

*F. Critical Appreciations.*

Gairdner, J. and Spedding, J. Studies in English History. Edinburgh, 1881.

Jusserand, J. J. Histoire Littéraire du Peuple Anglais. Vol. 2. Paris, 1894. English trans. 1895.

Morley, H. English Writers. Vol. vi. 1890. [Also for Fortescue, Capgrave, etc.]

Ten Brink, B. Geschichte der englischen Literatur. Vol. II. 2 vols. Strassburg, 1893. English trans. Robinson, W. C. 1893.

FORTESCUE.

Sir John Fortescue his Life and Works. Ed. Lord Clermont. 1869. 2 vols. (De Natura Legis Naturae (1461-3); De Laudibus legum Angliae (1471); De Titulo Edwardi Com. Marchiae; Defensio juris Domus Lancasteriae; A Declaration upon certayn Wrytinges (1471-3); Dialogue between Understanding and Faith (1471) etc.)

On the Governance of England. Ed. Plummer, C. With introduction, etc. Oxford, 1885. The best authority on Fortescue.

- Foss, E. *The Judges of England, 1848-64*, 9 vols., vol. iv.  
 Taine, H. A. *History of English Literature*. Eng. trans. vol. 1, bk. i, chap. 11, § vii. 1906.

## DEVOTIONAL AND DIDACTIC WORKS.

- De Imitatione Christi*. Ed. Ingram, J. K. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LXIII. 1893.  
 The early translation, mid-15th century, also version by Atkynson and the Lady Margtret.  
*Gesta Romanorum*. Translation, c. 1440. Wynkyn de Worde. 1524? Also ed. by Madden, Sir F., Roxburghe Club, 1838; Hertridge, S. J., E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. xxxiii, 1879, with notes on manuscripts. On the whole subject, see Oesterley, H., Berlin, 1872, who discusses date of original compilation and considers it to be English.  
*Hylton or Hilton, Walter*. 1. *Scala Perfectionis*. 2. *Devout Book to a temporal man*. 3. *Devout Treatise of the song of angels*. Early editions by W. de Worde (1 and 2), 1494, 1519, 1525, 1533; Pynson (1 and 2), 1506, (3) 1521; Notary, Julian, 1507; modern editions by Cressy, S. (1 and 2), 1659; Guy, B. F. (1 and 2), London, Dublin and Derby, 1869 (good preface and notes); and Dalgairns, J. B., 1901, reprint of Cressy's text. See D. of N. B. for MSS; also Inge, W. R., *Studies of English Mystics*, 1905.  
*Juliana of Norwich: Revelations of Divine Love*. First printed by Cressy, Dom S., 1670, reprinted 1845; modern editions by Warrack, Grace, 1901; and Tyrrell, Geo., S. J., 1902; also Collins, Hy., London and Derby, 1877. See Blomefield's *Hist. Norfolk*, iv, 81; Inge, W. R., *Studies of English Mystics*, 1905; Horstman's *Introduction to R. Rolle of Hampole*, 2 vols., 1895-6.  
*Legenda Aurea*. 15th century translation and additions. MSS: Brit. Mus. Add. 11,565, Harl. 4775 and others; Lambeth 72. See, on the whole subject and for specimens, Butler, Pierce, *Legenda Aurea*, Baltimore, 1899 (valuable); also Horstmann, C., *Old English Legendary*, E.E.T.S. LXXXVII.  
*Prymer (i.e. Prayer Book)*, c. 1400. Ed. Littlehales, H. 2 vols. 1891-2.

## CHRONICLES AND PAMPHLETS.

- Brut or Chronicle of England*. Ed. Brie, F. E.E.T.S. 1906.  
*English Chronicle, 1377-1461*. Ed. Davies, J. S. Camden Soc. 1856.  
*English Chronicle in Three 15th century Chronicles*. Ed. Gairdner, J. Camden Soc. 1880.  
*Commodities of England (before 1451) in the works of Sir John Fortescue*. Ed. Clermont. Vol. 1.  
*Historical Collections of a London Citizen, for Gregory's Chronicle, etc.* Ed. Gairdner, J. Camden Soc. 1876.  
*Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV.* Ed. Bruce, J. Camden Soc. 1838.  
 A valuable record.  
*Lincolnshire, Rebellion in*. Ed. Nichols, J. G. Camden Soc. Miscellany No. 1. 1847.  
*St Albans, First Battle at*. *Archæologia*, xx, 519.  
*Warkworth, J. Chronicle of the first thirteen years of the reign of Edward IV.* Ed. Halliwell, J. O. Camden Soc. 1839.

## LETTERS.

- Bekynnton, Correspondence of*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Rolls Series. 1872.  
*Original Letters*. Two Series. Ed. Ellis, Sir Henry. 1827.  
*Epistolæ Academicæ Oxon.* Ed. Anstey, H. Oxford Historical Soc. 1898.

Paston Letters, The. Ed. Gairdner, J. 4 vols. 1901. See also D. of N. B. and Morley's English Writers, vol. vi, chap. xi.

Plumpton Correspondence. Vol. i. Ed. Stapleton, T. Camden Soc. 1839.

For other specimens of 15th century prose, consult Early English Text Society's publications, *e.g.*

Book of Quinte Essence (1440-70). Ed. Furnivall, F. J. 1866.

English Conquest of Ireland, The. A.D. 1166-1185. Mainly from the Expugnatio Hibernica of Giraldus Cambrensis. Ed. Furnivall, F. J. [Mid-15th cent. prose.] 1896.

Landfrank's Chirurgie (1396 and 1420). Ed. Fleischhacker, B. von. 1894.

La Tour Landry (c. 1440). Ed. Wright, T. 1868.

Melusine (c. 1500). Ed. Donald, A. K. 1895.

Religious Pieces (c. 1440). Ed. Perry, G. G. 1867.

Secreta Secretorum. Three prose translations by Yonge, J., 1423. Ed. Steele, R. 1898.

Three Kings' Sons (c. 1500). Ed. Furnivall, F. J. 1895.

Two Fifteenth Century Cookery Books. Ed. Austin, T. 1888.

#### Dictionaries:

Catholicon Anglicum (1483). An English-Latin word-book. Ed. Hertridge, S. J. 1881. E.E.T.S. and Camden Soc.

Promptorium Parvulorum. Camden Soc. 1843-65. New edition, Mayhew, E.E.T.S., forthcoming.

On scribes and book trade, see:

Kirchhoff, Albrecht. Handschriftshändler des Mittelalters. Leipzig, 1853.

Morley, H. English Writers. Vol. ii, chap. xii. 1890.

Wattenbach, W. Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter. 3rd. ed. Leipzig, 1896.

For prices, see hints in Catalogues of MSS in College Libraries, Cambridge, ed. James, M. B.

## CHAPTERS XIII AND XIV

### THE INTRODUCTION OF PRINTING INTO ENGLAND AND THE EARLY WORK OF THE PRESS

AND

#### ENGLISH PROSE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. II

CAXTON. MALORY. BERNERS

#### General Authorities, etc.

Ames, J. Typographical Antiquities: being an historical account of Printing in England. 1749.

Bignmore, E. C. and Wyman, C. W. H. Bibliography of Printing. 3 vols. 1880-6.

Blades, E. H. Who was Caxton? 1877.

Blades, W. The life and typography of William Caxton. 2 vols. 1861-3.

British Museum Catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland and

Ireland, and of books in English printed abroad to the year 1640. 3 vols. 1884.

- Dibdin, T. F. *Typographical Antiquities*. Begun by Joseph Ames, augmented by William Herbert. 4 vols. 1810-19.
- Dibelius, W. *John Caspgrave und die Englische Schriftsprache*. Anglia, xxiii, xxiv *passim*.
- Duff, E. G. *The Printers, Stationers and Bookbinders of Westminster and London from 1476 to 1535*. Cambridge, 1906.
- William Caxton. Chicago, 1905.
- *A Century of the English Book-trade*. Bibliographical Society. 1905.
- Herbert, W. *Typographical Antiquities*. Begun by Joseph Ames. 3 vols. 1785-90.
- Lekebusch, J. *Die Londoner Urkundensprache von 1430-1500*. Halle 1906.
- Lewis, J. *Life of Caxton*. 1737.
- Madan, F. *The early Oxford press*. Oxford, 1895.
- *The Day-book of John Dorne*. Oxford Historical Society, Collectanea. Vol. I. Oxford, 1885.
- Middleton, Conyers. *The Origin of Printing in England*. Cambridge, 1735.
- Morley, H. *English Writers*. Vol. vi. 1890.
- Plomer, H. R. *A short history of English printing, 1476-1898*. 1900.
- Printers, *Handlists of English*. Bibliographical Society. 1895-1906.
- Proctor, R. G. C. *Jan van Doesborch*. Bibliographical Society Monographs, II. 1894.
- Römstedt, H. *Die englische Schriftsprache bei Caxton*. Göttingen, 1890.
- Sayle, C. E. *Early English printed English books in the University Library, Cambridge*. 4 vols. Cambridge, 1900 ff.
- [Certain of Caxton's prefaces and epilogues are reprinted in A. W. Pollard's *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse*, 1903.]

*Reprints of Books mentioned in the Text, etc.*

- Aesop, *The Fables of*, as first printed by W. Caxton in 1484 with those of Avian, Alfonso and Poggid. Ed. Jacobs, J. 2 parts. 1889.
- Apollyn d' Thyre, *The romance of Kyngé*. Reproduced in facsimile by Ashbee, E. W. 1870.
- Arnold, Richard. *The customs of London, otherwise called Arnold's Chronicle*. Ed. Douce, F. 1811.
- Aymon, *The right plesaunt and goodly historie of the foure sonnes of. Englisht from the French by W. Caxton*. Ed. Richardson, O. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. XLIV. 1884.
- Berners: *The history of the valiant knight Arthur of Little Britain, a romance of chivalry originally translated from the French by John Bouchier, Lord Berners*. Ed. Uttersaen, E. V. 1814.
- *The Castell of Love*. Printed c. 1540.
- *The chronicle of Froissart, translated out of French by Sir John Bouchier, Lord Berners, annis 1423-5*. [Pynson]. Ed. Ker, W. P. *Tudor Translations*. 6 vols. 1901-3. [A handy reduced edition of Berners' Froissart was published in 1895, ed. with introduction and notes by Macaulay, G. C. Baron J. M. B. C. Kervyn de Lettenhove's *Froissart: étude litt. sur le xiv<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1857, should be consulted.]
- *The boke of Duke Huon of Burdeaux, done into English by Sir John Bouchier, Lord Berners, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde about 1534*. Ed. Lee, S. L. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. XL, XLI, XLIII, L. 1882-7.
- *The Golden Boke of Marcus Aurelius (trans. from Guevara) 1535 ff.* [See Ten Brink, B., *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, Eng. trans. 1902, vol. III, 187 ff.]

- Berger, Dame Juliana: The Boke of Saint Albans. Reproduced in facsimile. Ed. Blades, William. 1881.
- A treatise of Fysshynge with an Angle: being a facsimile reproduction of the first book on the subject of fishing printed in England by Wynkyn de Worde at Westminster in 1496. Ed. Watkins, M. G. 1880. [See also *Reliquiae Antiquae*, 149.]
- Blanchardyn and Eglantine, Caxton's. Ed. Kellner, L. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LVIII. 1890.
- Charles the Great, The Life of, translated from the French by William Caxton. Ed. Herrtage, S. J. English Charlemagne romances, parts 3, 4. 1880-1.
- Chesse, Caxton's Game and plays of the, 1474, a verbatim reprint of the first edition. Ed. Axon, W. E. A. 1883.
- Chivalry, The Order of. Translated from the French by W. Caxton. Ed. Ellis, F. S. Kelmascott Press, Hammersmith, 1892.
- Christine de Pisan. Morale proverbes... reproduced in imitation of the original edition. Ed. Blades, W. 1859.
- Complaint of a lover's life, The. Controversy between a lover and a jay. Ed. Dibdin, T. F. Roxburghe Club, XVIII. 1818.
- Curial made by maystere Alain Charretier, The, translated by William Caxton. Collated with the French original by Paul Meyer and ed. Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LIV. 1888.
- Curteys, Book of, Caxton's. Ed. Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. III. 1868.
- Dialogues in French and English by William Caxton. c. 1483. Ed. Bradley, H. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LXXIX. 1900.
- Dictes and sayings of the philosophers, The. A facsimile reproduction. Ed. Blades, W. 1877.
- Eneydos, Caxton's. Ed. Culley, M. T. and Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LVII. 1890.
- Fabyan, R. The new chronicles of England and France, in two parts. Reprinted from Pynson's edition of 1516. Ed. Ellis, H. 1811.
- Godeffroy of Boloyn or the siege and conquest of Jerusalem.... Translated from the French by W. Caxton. Ed. Colvin, Mary N., Ph.D. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LXIV. 1893.
- Golden Legend, The. Caxton's trans. Ed. Ellis, F. S. 3 vols. Kelmascott Press, 1892; also ed. Ellis, F. S. 7 vols. 1900 ff.
- *Legenda aurea*. A study of Caxton's Golden Legend with special reference to its relations to the earlier English prose translation, by Butler, Pierce. Baltimore, 1899.
- Goste of Guy, The [fragment]. Reprinted in the *Athenaeum*, No. 3852. 24 August 1901.
- Helyas, knight of the Swan, The history of. Thoms' Collection of Early Prose Romances. Vol. III. 1828.
- Hundred Mery Tales, A. Ed. Hazlitt, W. C. 1887.
- Hye way to the spyttell house, The, by Robert Copland. Pieces of early popular poetry. Ed. Utterson, E. V. Vol. II. 1877.
- Jyl of Breyntford's Testament, by Robert Copland, and other short pieces. Ed. Furnivall, F. J. 1871.
- Kalender of Shepherdes, The. The edition of Paris 1503 in photographic facsimile; a faithful reprint of R. Pynson's edition of London 1506. Ed. Sommer, H. O. 1892. [See Warton's *English Poetry*, § XXVII.]
- Knight of La Tour Landry..., The Boke of the. Translated from the original French into English in the reign of Henry VI by Caxton. Ed. Wright, T. E.E.T.S., XXXIII. 1868.

- Malory; Le Morte Darthur** by Sir Thomas Malory. The original edition of William Caxton now reprinted and ed. Sommer, H. O. 3 vols. 1889-91. [Contains, in vol. II, a long and valuable introduction on Sir Thomas Malory and the various editions of *Le Morte Darthur*, etc.; and, in vol. III, a series of studies on the sources, with an introductory essay by Andrew Lang. Other editions are Sir Edw. Strachey's, 'revised for modern use,' 1884 ff.; Rhys's, with designs by Aubrey Beardsley, 1892, and reprints in the Temple Classics, the English Classics, etc. For criticism, see further Saintsbury, G., *The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory*, 1897; Smith, G. Gregory, *The Transition Period*, 1900; Ker, W. P., *Essays on Medieval Literature*, 1905.]
- Mery Jests of the Wyddow Edyth, The.** Hazlitt's Old English Jest-Books. Vol. III. 1864.
- New lands found by the messengers of the King of Portugal, Of the.** Arber's *The first three English books on America*. Birmingham, 1885.
- Oliver of Castile, The history of,** reproduced from the unique copy of Wynkyn de Worde's edition of 1518. Ed. Graves, R. E. Roxburghe Club, CXXX. 1898.
- Ovid. Six bookes of Metamorphoses.** Translated out of Frensshe by William Caxton. Ed. Herbert, G. Roxburghe Club, xxvi. 1819.
- Paris and Vienne.** Ed. [by Hazlitt, W. C.]. 1868.
- Parson of Kalenborowe, The.** Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung. 1887. Bd. XIII, pp. 129 sqq.
- Petronylla, The parasite life of.** London by R. Pynson. Fugitive tracts written in verse. Ed. Huth, H. No. 1. 1875.
- Pylgrymage of Sir Richard Guylforde to the Holy Land, A.D. 1506, The,** from a copy believed to be unique from the press of Richard Pynson. Ed. Ellis, H. Camden Society, LL. 1851.
- Recuyell of the historyes of Troyes..., The.** (Caxton's.) Ed. Sommer, H. 2 vols. 1894.
- Reul, Paul de. The language of Caxton's Reynard the Fox.** Université de Gand. Recueil de travaux publiés par la faculté de philosophie et lettres, fasc. 26. Gand, 1901.
- Revelation to the monk of Evesham, The.** Printed by W. de Machlinia about 1482. Ed. Arber, E. English Reprints, XVIII. 1869.
- Reynard the Fox, The History of,** translated and printed by W. Caxton. Ed. Arber, E. English Scholars Library, 1. 1880.
- Reynard, the Foxe, The History of,** by William Caxton. Kelmscott Press, Hammersmith, 1892.
- St Ursula, Guiscard and Sigismund, The life of.** Roxburghe Club, xxiv. 1818.
- Salomon and Marcolphus, The dialogue or communing between the wise King.** Ed. Duff, E. Gordon. 1892.
- Three Kings of Cologne, The.** An early English translation of the *Historia trium regum* by John of Hildesheim. Ed. from the MSS by Horstmann, C. E. E. T. S. LXXXV. 1886.
- Virgilius. From the edition by Doesborch.** Thoms' Early English Prose Romances. Vol. II. 1828.
- Walsingham, The foundation of the chapel of.** Fugitive tracts written in verse. Ed. Huth, H. No. II. 1875.

## CHAPTER XV

ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH EDUCATION. UNIVERSITIES AND  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO THE TIME OF COLET

## (a) ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES.

(1) *Manuscripts.* Vast stores of documents referring to the early history of Oxford and Cambridge are to be found in the treasuries or muniment rooms of the several colleges, and in the registries of the two universities.

Thomas Baker (1656-1740), sometime Fellow of St John's, a laborious and accurate antiquarian, left extensive writings, which are preserved in the Harleian collection in the British Museum and in the Cambridge University Library. In the antiquarian collections made by William Cole (1714-82), vicar of Milton, Cambridgeshire, and bequeathed by him to the British Museum, is much useful material extracted by him from original sources.

(b) *Printed Books.* (1) CAMBRIDGE.

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Valuable occasional references to university history and life are made by contemporary chroniclers and poets, amongst whom particular note may be made of Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*, Matthew,

of Paris and Richard of Devizes. The following editions may be distinguished:

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For *Piers Plowman*, see chapter 1 of present volume, and bibliography.

Mention need hardly be made of rich material to be found in the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, and in *The Prioress's Tale*. Among early Scottish chroniclers may be singled out John Major, whose *De Historia Gentis Scotorum Libri Sex* appeared at Paris in 1521, and was republished at Edinburgh in 1740. For direct personal observation of Scottish university life in the middle of the sixteenth century reference may be made to:

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#### (b) MODERN AUTHORITIES.

##### (1) GENERAL.

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## CHAPTER XVI

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## CHAPTER XVII

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<sup>1</sup> The introduction to each of the separate ballads, with the Additions and Corrections, gives a bibliography for the study of that ballad in all its relations.

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Older criticism, foreign and domestic, of English ballads is summarised in F. B. Gummere's *Introduction to Old English Ballads* cited above. For admirable discussion of ballad poetry in other lands see the introduction to *Constantino Nigra's Canti Popolari del Piemonte*, Turin, 1888, pp. xi-xxxviii, and Gaston Paris, *De l'Étude de la Poesie Populaire*, in *Melusine*, 1, 1 ff. Opposed to their doctrine is John Meier, whose *Kunstlieder im Volksgunde*, Halle, 1906, indicates its theory by its title, and is not very far from Henderson's point of view. It must be remembered, finally, that the majority of the poems published by the *Ballad Society*, such as street-songs, broadsides and popular ditties of every sort, belongs not to the subject of this chapter, but to journalism.

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F. B. G. & A. R. W.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS VERSE TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY—FINAL WORDS

#### SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NOTES.

As in the case of the bibliography to chap. xvii, vol. 1, a few works on the social and political history of England during the Middle Ages are included in the following bibliography; and advantage has been taken of the opportunity afforded by a concluding chapter to add a few notes on books and writers not specifically dealt with elsewhere. References to other histories of English literature have been added in cases where fuller details are given than has been either possible or deemed desirable in this work.

In addition to the general bibliographies mentioned on p. 419, vol. 1, W. Swan Sonnenschein's *Best Books*, 1891, and *Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literature*, 1895, may be mentioned as very useful aids, and, in their respective spheres, G. K. Fortescue's *Index of Printed Books* added to the British Museum during the past 25 years, and C. Sayle's *Early English Printed Books in the University Library, Cambridge (1475-1640)*, 4 vols., Cambridge, 1900-7, are invaluable. The catalogue of the London Library, 1903, and its various supplements, may also be found useful.

The Appendix volume to W. T. Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual*, compiled by H. G. Bohn (1864), contains a useful list of the publications of the Roxburghe, Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs, Surtees Society, Abbotsford Club, Camden Society, Spalding Club, Irish Archaeological, Parker, Percy, Aelfric,

Chetham, Philobiblon, Caxton, English Historical and Oecianic Societies, Wartok Club, and other literary, learned and scientific societies; of books printed at private presses (Auchinleck, Lee Priory, etc.); and of privately printed series (J. Payne Collier, Halliwell, Maidment, Turnbull, Russell Smith, etc.). A revised edition of Lowndes, brought up to date, would be a very great boon, indeed to all workers in English literature.

*English and Latin Writers and Texts.*

- Adam of Usk (*f.* 1400), chronicler (1377-1404). Ed. Thompson, E. M. 1876.
- Audelay, John. Poems: a specimen of the Shropshire dialect in the 15th cent. Ed. Halliwell, J. O. Percy Society. 1844.
- Baker, Geoffrey (*f.* 1350). For Baker's chronicles and for Sir Thomas de la More, see Stubbs, W., *Chronicles of Edw. I and II*, Rolls Series, 1882-6; and ed. Thompson, E. M., Oxford, 1889.
- Baston, Robert (*f.* 1300), scholar of Oxford and poet, of whom it is asserted that, when captured by Robert Bruce, he was obliged to buy his release by composing poems of exultation over the defeat of the English. Cott. MS. Titus A. xx.
- Berners, Dame Juliana. Cf. *Le Venerz de Twety*, Reliq. Ant., vol. 1, p. 149, and also *The Booke of Hawkyng*, Rel. Ant., vol. 1, p. 293.
- Blanforde, Henry (*f.* 1330), chronicler. Ed. Riley, H. T., in *Chronica Monast. S. Albani*. Rolls Series. 1866.
- Brampton, T. Paraphrase on the Seven Penitential Psalms (1414). Percy Society. 1842.
- Elmham, Thomas (d. 1440?), chronicler of St Augustine's monastery, Canterbury, and biographer of Henry V. Ed. Hardwick, C. Rolls Series. 1858. Memorials of Henry V. Ed. Cole, C. A. Rolls Series. 1858. See also ed. Hearn, T., Oxford, 1727.
- Febyan, Robert (d. 1513), a careful will-maker, if a poor chronicler, whose *Concordance of Histories*, printed by Wynson, 1516, ed. Ellis, H., 1811, is not without its value with respect to the history of London. See Wartok, T., *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, vol. II (1840), sect. xxvii.
- Gascoigne, T. (1406-53). *Dictionarium Theologicum*. Extracts printed by J. E. Thorold Rogers, Oxford, 1881, illustrative of matters concerning church and state.
- Geoffrey the Grammarian, or Starkey (*f.* 1440), author of an English-Latin dictionary, *Promptorium Parvulorum* or *Promptuarium Parvulorum Clerico-rum*. A work of much importance with respect to 15th cent. East Anglian English. Printed by Pynson, Wynkyn de Worde, etc. Ed. Way, A. 8 vols. Camden Soc. 1843-65. The E.E.T.S. has an edition in hand. A *Hortus*, or Latin-English dictionary, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1500, may be based on another of Starkey's works.
- Grey, Wm. (d. 1478), scholar of Oxford, bishop of Ely, humanist and collector of books, many of which are still among the treasures of Balliol. See vol. III of the present work, chapter I.
- Hardyng, John (1378-1435?), chronicler. Of the literary merit of Hardyng's *English Chronicle in Metre* from the first *Begynning of Englande* unto the *Reigne of Edward the Fourth* (printed by Grafton in 1543 and reprinted by Ellis, H., in 1812), little can be said save that, though he 'poisoned the wells' by manufacturing certain of his documents, he carried on the work of the earlier chroniclers. See Palgrave, F., *Documents and records illustrating the history of Scotland*, 1837.

- Humphrey**, duke of Gloucester (1391-1447). The 'good duke Humphrey,' a lover of books and a beneficent disposer of them, patron and friend of many scholars, of Ashley, Capgrave, Lydgate, Peacock, Whethamstede, 'kept such a house as was never yet kept in England' (Latimer), gave his books to a university which still cherishes his name in its library and should be remembered among the 'people of importance' in the 15th century. The part taken by him in the foundation of libraries will be considered in a later section of the present work devoted to book-collections. See Ten Brink, B., *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. II, Eng. trans., 1901, pp. 310 ff. and 319 ff.; Warton, T., *History of English Poetry*, 1840, vol. II, sect. xx, pp. 264 ff.; and Pauli, B., *Pictures of Old England* (Eng. trans.), 1861.
- Ingulph** (d. 1109), abbot of Crowland or Croyland. For the fourteenth and fifteenth century chronicle erroneously associated with his name, see Savile, H., *Scriptores post Bedam*, 1596; Riley, H. T., 1854; Liebermann, F., *Über ostenglische Geschichtsquellen des 12, 13, 14 Jahrhunderts besonders den falschen Ingulf* (N. Archiv f. alt-deutsche Gesch.-Kunde, Bd. XVIII, Hanover, 1892); Birch, W. de G., *Chronicle of Croyland Abbey*, 1883; Searle, W. G., *Ingulf and the Historia Croylandensis*, Camb. Antiq. Soc., 1894.
- John of Bury** (fl. 1460), Cambridge scholar and opponent of Peacock. MS of *Gladius Salomonis* in Bodleian, extracts in Babington's ed. of Peacock's *Repressor*.
- Knighton** (or Cnitthou), Henry (fl. 1363), chronicler (from the days of Edgar to 1366). The continuation of Knighton's work, by another hand, is valuable in respect of Wyclif and the peasants' revolt. Ed. Lumby, J. B. *Rolls Series*. 1889-95.
- Lanercost Chronicle** (1201-1346), useful for the history of the Border, etc. Ed. Stevenson, J. 1839. Imbedded in this chronicle, under date 1244, is the English couplet
- Wille Gris, Wille Gris,  
Thinche twat you was, and qwat you es,
- which refers to the Norfolk peasant boy who went to seek his fortune possessing naught but a little pig. The swineboy married a rich widow and he kept his former state before him by a picture of himself and his pig inscribed as above. See Craik, G. L., *Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, vol. I, 1869, p. 226; and *Chronicon de Lanercost*, p. 52.
- Lauder**, William. *Minor Poems*. Ed. Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. xli, 1870.
- Litchfield**, Wm. (d. 1447), poet and preacher. His poems are among the *Cains MSS*, No. 174, Cambridge. He is said to have written over 3000 sermons.
- Littleton**, Sir Thomas (1402-81), author of a work on Tenures, in law-French, of which it has been said that 'probably no legal treatise ever combined so much of the substance with so little of the show of learning, or so happily avoided pedantic formalism without forfeiting precision of statement' (J. M. Bigg, in D. of N.B.). Littleton's book will be further dealt with in a later section of the present work dealing with legal literature. MSS in Cambridge University library, Mm. 5. 2, Ee. 1. 2, Dd. 11. 60; first edition published by Letton and Machlin; later, by Pynson, c. 1495 ff. See ed. Tomlins, T. E., 1841. Littleton's will throws interesting light on the contents of his library.
- Losings**, Herbert de (1054?-1119), first bishop of Norwich and founder of Norwich cathedral. For his sermons, printed from a Cambridge MS,

- see Goulburn, E. M. and Symonds, H., *Life, Letters and Sermons of B. H. de L.*, 2 vols., 1878. The letters throw much light on current monastic life and on educational method.
- Lyndwood, William (1375?-1446), Cambridge and Oxford scholar, canonist and author of *Constitutiones Provinciales Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, c. 1498. There was an earlier Oxford printed edition, and a later Oxford edition is the folio of 1679.
- Metham, John. *Works*. Ed. Craig, H. E.E.T.S. 1906.
- Mirk, John (fl. 1403?). *Festial* (sermons, explaining feast days). Ed. Erbe, T. E.E.T.S. 1905. Printed by Caxton, 1483.
- *Manuale Sacerdotum*. For MSS, see Miss Bateson's article in D. of N. B.
- *Duties of a Parish Priest*. Ed. Peacock, E. E.E.T.S. 1868. 'This poem, which Mirk says he translated from the Latin *Pars Oculi*, is neither a versified translation of John de Butgh's *Pupilla Oculi* (a dictionary of theological subjects alphabetically arranged), nor of Mirk's *Manual*, as has been suggested, but of the *Pupilla Oculi* by William de Pagula.' M. Bateson.
- Murimuth, Adam (1275?-1347), scholar of Oxford and chronicler of the period 1303-47. Ed. Thompson, E. M. *Rolls Series*. 1889.
- Osbern, a learned monk of Gloucester. For his 'immense etymological Latin dictionary,' see Bateson, M., *Medieval England*, p. 242.
- Otterbourne, Thomas (fl. 1400), chronicler (from the early history of England to 1420). MS Harl. 3643. See T. Hearne's *Duo rerum Angl. script.*, Oxford, 1732.
- Ratis Raving and other moral and religious pieces, in prose and verse. Ed. from Camb. MS, Kk. 1. 5, by Lumby, J. B. 1870. E.E.T.S. XLIII.
- Richard of St Victor (d. 1173?), mystic and philosopher. Of Scotch birth, but whose life was spent in the Parisian abbey of St Victor. For a list of his works see the article by Kingsford, C. L., in D. of N. B. See also Migne, J. P., *Pat. Latina*, vol. cxcvi.
- Robert of Avesbury (fl. 1350), military chronicler of the deeds of Edw. III to 1356. Ed. Thompson, E. M. *Rolls Series*. 1889.
- Rous or Ross, John (1411?-1491), Oxford scholar and antiquary, author of *Historia Regum Angliae* (Cott. MS Vesp. A. xii: see ed. Hearne, T., 1745), from the beginning to 1486. While his history is of little value, the designs which adorn his life of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (Cott. MS Jul. E. iv), are of some interest.
- Scogan, Henry (1361?-1407), poet and friend of Chaucer. He must not be confused with the somewhat mythical John Scogan (fl. 1480?), court jester to Edw. IV, whose jests were collected in the 16th cent.
- Stanbridge, John (1463-1510), scholar of Oxford and author of *Vocabula, Vulgaria*, etc., school books printed by Wynkyn de Worde early in the 16th cent. See Hazlitt, W. C., *Schools, School books and Schoolmasters*, 1888.
- Swifthead, Richard (fl. 1350), scholar of Oxford and mathematician. See Brodrick, G. C., *Memorials of Merton*, Oxford Hist. Soc., 1885.
- Thomas of Burton. *Chronica monast. de Melsa usque ad a. 1396*, etc. Ed. Bond, E. A. 3 vols. *Rolls Series*. 1866-8.
- Thorne, William (fl. 1397), author of an important chronicle of the abbots of St Augustine's, Canterbury. Ed. Twyssen, Sir R. *Hist. Anglicanae script.* X. 1652. (Twyssen includes Simeon Dunelm, Joh Hagustald, Ricardus Hagustald, Ailredus Rievall, Radulphus de Diceto, Joh Brompton, Jornall, Gervasius Doroborn, T. Stubbs, G. Thogn, H. Knighton.)

**Tiptoft, John**, earl of Worcester (1427?-70), patron of scholars, purchaser of books, translator of Cicero and as cruel a man as any of the Grants of the Italian renaissance. Among the scholars whom John Tiptoft patronised, John Phrease (d. 1465) must not be forgotten. He was one of the remarkable company of students who sought knowledge in Italy, before the revival of letters made itself felt in England. And an earlier patron of Phrease was William Grey of Balliol, bishop of Ely, whose love of classical learning had taken him abroad to procure books and whose college and cathedral benefited largely through his generous gifts.

**Walsingham, Thomas** (d. 1422), chronicler. *Chronicon Anglie* (1328-88), ed. Thompson, E. M., 1874; *Gesta Abbatum* 793-1411, Rolls Series, 3 vols., 1867 ff.; *Historia Anglicana* (1272-1422), ed. Riley, H. T., Rolls Series, 2 vols., 1863; *Ypodigma Neustriacæ*, ed. Riley, H. T., Rolls Series, 1876. As indicated in previous chapters, Walsingham is of chief importance in connection with Wyclif and the peasants' revolts. He is an adverse witness in the matter of the Lollards. The relation of the above chronicles to each other and to other chronicles and MSS is discussed by Leadam, L. S., in the D. of N. B.

**Walton, John** (fl. 1410), translator (in verse) of Boethius, printed in 1525 as 'The boke of Comfort, etc.' For MSS, see Pollard, A. F., in D. of N. B. See also Warton, T., *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, vol. II, sect. xx (1840), pp. 255-6.

**Walter of Henley's Husbandry**, etc. Ed. Lamond, E. B. *Hist. Soc.* 1890.

**Wey, The Itineraries of William** (1407?-76), Fellow of Eton College, to Jerusalem, 1458-62, etc. Roxburghe Club, 1857.

**William of Drogheda** (d. 1245?), scholar of Oxford and canonist. MSS in Caius College, Cambridge, etc.

**William of Ramsey** (fl. 1219), monk of Crowland, poet and writer of saints' lives. His *Guthlac* poem is in the Cambridge University library (Dd. xi. 78).

**Woodville, A.** For the 'balet' or virelai on fleckle fortune, composed by the ill-fated Anthony Woodville, second earl Rivers (1442?-83), in Pontefract castle, shortly before he was executed, see Percy's *Reliques*, *House's* chronicle, ed. Hearne, and *Ritson's Ancient Songs*, ed. Hazlitt, W. C., p. 149.

**Worcester, Wm.** (1415-82?), scholar of Oxford, traveller, chronicler and secretary to Sir John Fastolf (see Paston Letters). For a complete list of his writings, of which an *Itinerarium*, ed. Nasmyth, J., 1778, is, perhaps, the most important, see the article by Tait, J., in D. of N. B.

**Agincourt**, poems on. See the *Percy Reliques*, 3rd ser. bk. 1; Warton, § xx; etc.

**Anecdota Literaria.** Ed. Wright, T. 1844. Contains, in addition to items previously discussed, fabliaux (The Miller of Abington, etc.), Goliardic poems, poems on the Different Classes of Society and miscellaneous pieces such as Ragman Roll.

**Babets Boek**, 'The' (c. 1475), Aristotle's ABC (c. 1430), Urbanitatis (c. 1460), Stans Puer ad Mensam, The Lytille Childrenes Lytil Boke (c. 1480), The Bokes of Nurture of Hugh Rhodes (temp. Henry VIII) and John Russell (c. 1460-70), Wynkyn de Worde's Boke of Keruyng (1513), The Booke of Demeanor (1619), The Boke of Curtasye (1480-40) (see also Breul, K., *Eng. Stud.* ix, 51 ff.), Spager's Schoole of Vertue (1557), etc., etc., with some French and Latin poems on like subjects, and some Forewords on Education in Early England. Ed. Furnivall, F. J. 1868. The volume

also contains some of Richard Hill's transcriptions, in one of which the poet speaks sympathetically of the schoolboy of his time (c. 1500):

I wold ffayn be a clarke;  
but yet hit is a strange werke;  
the byrehyn twyggis be so sharpe,  
Mk mykith me have a faynt harte.  
what awaylith it me thowgh I say nay?

Songs, Carols and other Miscellaneous Poems from the Balliol MS 354 (Richard Hill's Commonplace Book) has just been published (1908) by the E.E.T.S., ed. Dyboski, R.

Barnwell Priory. Liber Memorandum Ecclesie de Bernewelle. Ed. Clark, J. W., with an introduction by Maitland, F. W. 1907.

Camden Society. 1838 ff. In addition to the volumes referred to elsewhere under specific heads, may be mentioned the Plumpton correspondence, ed. Stapleton, T. (Letters, chiefly domestic, temp. Edw. IV-Henry VIII), 1839; Anecdotes and Traditions, illustrative of Early English History and Literature, ed. Thoms, W. J., 1839; A Contemporary narrative of the proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler, prosecuted for Sorcery 1824, ed. Wright, T., 1843; A Relation . . . of the Isle of England c. 1500, trans. from the Italian by Sneyd, C. A., 1847; and Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou, etc., ed. Monro, C., 1863.

Cato. See bibliography to chap. VII under Burgh. Also Warton's Hist. Eng. Poetry, 1840, § xxvii.

Cookery Books, Two 15th cent. c. 1430 and 1450. Ed. Austin, T. E.E.T.S. 1883. For other books of cookery, important for the light they cast on manners and social life, see The forme of Cury, a roll of ancient English cookery compiled c. 1390, by the master cook of king Richard II, ed. Pegge, S., 1780; Liber Cure Cocorum, a cookery book in verse, c. 1440, ed. Morris, R., Phil. Soc., 1862; A noble Boke off Cookry (16th cent.), 1882; Warner, R., Antiquitates Culinariae, 1791; and an article in the Quarterly Review, Jan. 1894.

Early English Text Society. Practically all the publications of both the Original and the Extra Series are referred to under specific heads. The list of works mentioned in the current prospectus as awaiting publication as soon as funds permit, and of MSS and old books which need copying or re-editing, includes, *inter alia*, the following: Hampole's unprinted works; Hereford's Bible translation; Lydgate's unprinted works; early treatises on music; Skelton's englishing of Diodorus Siculus; T. Breus's Passion of Christ, 1422; Lollard theological treatises; Hylton's Ladder of Perfection; John Watton's englished Speculum Christiani; Stevyn Scrope's Doctryne and Wyse dome of the Auncyent Philosophers, 1450; Alain Chartier's Quadrilogue englished; Shirley's Book of Gode Maners; The Court of Sapience; Wynkyn de Worde's English and French Phrase-book; the Craft of Dombrynge, the earliest English treatise on Arithmetic; the Book of the Foundation of St Bartholomew's Hospital, c. 1425; Caxton's Mirror of the World, etc., etc. It is to be hoped that the Society may soon be able to publish the above and many more texts urgently needed.

Gy de Wasewyke, Speculum. Ed. Morrill, G. L. E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. LXXV. 1898.

Hazlitt, W. O. (ed.). Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of England. 4 vols. 1864.

A valuable collection of fabliaux, debates, tales in verse, etc. The first volume contains, among other poems, The King and the Barker, a

'worde' of the King and Miller, or Rauf Colliear type, of a king's adventures with one of his subjects; The Cokwolds Daunce, an Arthurian tale to which reference has already been made (vol. I, p. 464); The Thrush and the Nightingale debate from the Digby MS, *temp.* Edw. I: 'Somer is comen with love to tounne'; Ragman Roll, a satire on women; The Debate of the Carpenter's Tools; Colyn Blowhole's Testament, cf. The Testament of Mr Andro Kennedy, by Dunbar, referred to on p. 256 of the present volume; The Childe of Bristowe, one of the most beautiful of legends of filial devotion, a tale of self-sacrifice, to save a covetous father from the pains of purgatory, told with a direct simplicity that reveals the audience to which it was probably addressed. When everything of his father's ill-gotten wealth has been restored, and whatsoever else is left of the inherited estate has been spent in alms and masses to relieve the pains suffered by his father as revealed to him in fortnightly visions, the 'childe' goes in quest of more money still to the 'maister' whose 'prentys' in 'Bristow' he is, to sell himself as a slave:

myn owne body y wil selle to the,  
for ever to be thy lad,

and the tale ends as an unsophisticated audience would wish it to end: How the Wise Man taught his Son; How the Gouff Wife taught her Daughter; How a Merchande dyd hys Wyfe Betray, or a Penniworth of Wit (a tale of the testing of true and false love, c. 1335); A Mery Geste how the Plowman lerned his Pater Noster; the Lyfe of Roberte the Deryll, etc.

Volume II contains: Piers of Fullham, or 'vayse conseytes of folyache love undyr colour of fyscheng and fowlyng'; The Batayle of Egyngc-courte; Adam Bel Clym of the Cloughe and Wyllyam of Cloudestle, a ballad of the greenwood (see p. 408 of the present volume); together with sundry other poems and The Nutbrowne Mayde.

Volume III, among other pieces, contains The Debate and Stryfe Betweene Somer and Wynter; The Tale of the Basyn, a popular, coarse satire setting forth the unlucky adventures that happened to a priest and his paramour by means of an enchanted 'basin'; A Mery Geste of the Frere and the Boye, printed 'at London in Fletestrate at the sygne of the sonne' by Wynkyn de Worde, about the year 1512 (Cambridge facsimile, including the delightful woodcut, 1907), 'an agusing tale of enchantment, popular in many forms, of 'a good sturdy Jaddie,' who became possessed of a pipe the music of which caused beast and man to dance, even the 'frere' set on by Jack's 'stepmoder' to beat him (cf. the version in the Percy Folio MS, ed. Furnivall and Hales); The Turnament of Totenham (referred to in vol. I of the present work, p. 366); A Mery Jest of Dane Hew Monk of Leicestre, and how he was foure times slain and once hanged; the Parliament of Byrdes; The smyth whych that forged hym a new dame, a tale of magic, relating how a proud smith, emulating a miracle of the Lord, who had re-made his 'old beldame' into a 'byrd bright,' so that she was

lovesemé of chete,

Bright as blosome on breere,

None in Egypt her pere,

endeavoured to perform the same operation in the case of his wife. It is a rough, comic tale, suited for a popular audience.

And volume IV contains The Hye Way to the Spyttel Hous and other reprints of 16th century 'bokes,' to which reference will be made in volume III of this work.

- Hunting of the Harp.** A rough and tumble tale. See Weber, H., *Metrical Romances of the XIII, XIV and XV cent.*, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1810.
- Husbondrie, Palladius on.** Trans. c. 1420. Ed. Lodge, B. and Hertridge, S. J. E.E.T.S. LII-LXII. 1872-9.
- Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, The Parliament of Devils, etc.** Lambeth MS 853, c. 1460. Ed. Furnivall, F. J., E.E.T.S. 1867. Contains \*Stans Puer ad Mensam, How the Good Wife taught her Daughter, How the Wise Man taught his Son, The Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life, etc.
- Kildare, Satire on the people of.** (1308.) See *Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, 174 ff., and Heuser, W., *Die Kildare-Gedichte*, Bonn, 1904. An earlier work of Irish interest is Dermot and the Earl (c. 1170), ed. O'Byrne, G. H., Oxford, 1892.
- Lollards.** In addition to the poems mentioned in the bibliography to chap. II, see the satire in Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, ed. Hazlitt, p. 104.
- Miracle Plays, Sermon agst.** See *Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, 42 ff., and Mätzner, F., *Altengl. Sprachproben*, II, 222.
- Miscellanies, Early English, in prose and verse, ... 15th cent.** Ed. Halliwell, J. O. 1855. (Contains *The Friar and the Boy*, the *Vision of Philibert* regarding the Body and the Soul, *Earth upon Earth* (see Fiedler, H. G., *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, April 1903), a *schorte tretice for a mane to knowe wyche tyme of the yere hit is best to graffe or to plante treys, the crafte of the lymnyng of bokys*, the 'mornyng' of a hunted hare, etc., etc.)
- Percy Society, 1840 ff.** Among the volumes not referred to elsewhere under specific heads may be mentioned *The Payne and Sowwe of Epyll Maryage*, in verse, printed by Wynkyn de Worde 1509, ed. Collier, J. P., 1840; *The Boke of Curtasye ... ppeem*, illustrative of the domestic manners of the 15th cent., ed. Halliwell, J. O., 1841; *Paraphrase on the Seven Penitential Psalms*, in English metre, 15th cent., ed. Black, W. H., 1842; *Satirical Songs and Poems on Costume*, 13th to 19th cent., ed. Fairholt, F. W., 1849; and *A Poem on the times of Edward II* from a MS in the library of St Peter's College, Cambridge, ed. Hardwick, C., 1849.
- Political and other Poems (26) from Digby MS 102, etc.** Ed. Kail, J. E.E.T.S. 1904.
- Political, Religious and Love Poems.** Ed. Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. 1866. Re-edited 1903. Contains, among other things to which reference has already been made, a sketch of the metrical romance of Amoryus and Cleopes, by John Metham of Norwich, scholar of Cambridge 1448-9; and a poem by Henry Baradoun, c. 1483, of a wastrel's life, from which the following stanza may be quoted as a sample:
- In the courte, is many noble Roome;  
But god knowith, I can noon sochê cacche  
ffrom a maister, I am be-come a grome,  
And bondê mysilff to waytyng and to wacche;  
With evere gadryn, I stonde schynde the hacche,  
Gapyng and staryng wanderyng to and fro;  
But for all this, so good can I cacche:  
Thus am I preptice and servaunt unto woe.
- Quinte Essence, The Book of.** c. 1460-70. Ed. Furnivall, F. J. E.E.T.S. 1866.
- Robin Hood.** See Sidney Lee's article in D. of N. B.; Child, F. J., *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Boston, 1883; Hales, J. W., in Hales and Furnivall's edition of the *Percy Folio MS*, 1867, and the ballads there printed; Ten Brink, B., *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, Eng. trans., vol. II, 184 ff.; Ritson, J., *Robin Hood: a Collection of all poems, etc., relating to him*, 2 vols., 1795 ff.; Thoms, W. J., *Early English Prose Romances*, 1828 ff.;

Wright, T., *Essays on subjects connected with the Literature, Popular Superstitions and History of England in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. 1846, vol. II; Pollard, A. W., reprints Wynkyn de Worde's *A litte greste of Robin Hood in his Fifteenth Century Poetry and Prose*, 1903.

• For Fulk Fitzwarine see *History of Fulk Fitzwarine, an outlawed baron, from a 13th cent. MS. with literal Eng. trans. and notes*, ed. Wright, T., Warton Club, 1853; Wright, T., *Essays as above*; ed. Michel, F., Paris, 1834; and the recent trans. by Kemp-Welsh, A., in the *King's Classics Series*, 1903. See also Moland, L. and d'Héricault, Ch., in *Nouvelles françaises en prose du XIV<sup>e</sup> s.*, Paris, 1858.

On the interesting race of outlaws generally, see Jusserand, J. J., *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 252 ff. In T. Wright's *Political Songs of England*, Camden Soc., 1839, p. 231, there is a spirited 'Outlaw's Song of Trailllebaston,' of the time of Edw. II, the last verse of which shows how the writer combined the arts of author and publisher in 'le joly umbray' of the 'vert bois de Belregard,'

En le bois de Belregard, où vole le jay,  
• E chaunte russinole tous jours sants delay.  
.....  
Cest rym fust fet al bois desous un lorer,  
Là chaunte merle, russinole, e cyre l'espervier;  
Escrit estoit en parchemyn pur mont remembrer,  
E gitté en haut chemyn, qe um le dust trover.

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Wace. See vol. I, pp. 447, etc.

**William the Clerk.** For the various works that have passed under the name of this Anglo-Norman thirteenth century poet see *Le Roman des Aventures de Fregus*, éd. Michel, F., Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1841 (an Arthurian shepherd boy story); *Meon's Fabliaux* (see above); *Le Bestiaire divin* de G. clerc de Normandie, éd. Hippeau, Ch., Caen, 1852; *Das Tierbuch des norman. Dichters G. le C.*, Reinsch, R., Leipzig, 1892; *De Becant de Dieu*, éd. Martin, E., Halle, 1869 ('un des plus beaux poèmes moraux que nous ait laissés le moyen âge,' Pifaget, A., in Julliville, t. II, 182). The Priest and Alison tale would appear to be by another Norman William.

## TABLE OF PRINCIPAL DATES

- 1070 Hereward's rising at Ely.  
 12th cent. ff. Religious plays.  
 1100-1135. King Henry I.  
 1119 P. de Thaun's *Comput.*  
 c. 1130 P. de Thaun's *Bestiaire*.  
 1135-1154 King Stephen  
 c. 1148 Gaimar's *History*.  
 (?) 1149 Vacarius teaches civil law  
 at Oxford.  
 1154-1189 King Henry II.  
 ff. 1160-1180 Chrétien de Troyes.  
 1162 St Thomas à Becket, abp of  
 Canterbury (murdered, 1170).  
 c. 1167 *Canute Song*.  
 1167 Oxford as a *studium generale*.  
 ff. 1170 Wace.  
 c. 1173 Garnier de Pont Sainte  
 Maxence.  
 1173-4 Jordan Fantosme.  
 ff. 1180 Marie de France.  
 1189-1199 King Richard Cœur de  
 Lion.  
 1193-1280 Albertus Magnus.  
 c. 1196 Ambroise's *Hist. de la guerre  
 sainte*.  
 1199-1216 King John.  
 ff. 1200 Layamon.  
 1214?-1234 Roger Bacon.  
 1216-1272 King Henry III.  
 1217 Dominicans settle in Paris.  
 1221 Dominicans at Oxford.  
 1224 Franciscans at Oxford and  
 Cambridge.  
 c. 1226 *Histoire de Guillaume le  
 Maréchal*.  
 ff. 1230-1250 Bartholomæus Angli-  
 cus.  
 1230?-1298 Jacobus a Voragine.  
 c. 1237 *Romance of the Rose*, Wil-  
 liam of Lorris, continued (c. 1278)  
 by John Clopinel of Meun.  
 1253 Death of Robert Grosseteste.  
 c. 1263 Foundation of Balliol Col-  
 lege.  
 c. 1268-1274 Walter de Merton's  
 foundations at Malden and Oxford.  
 1265-1321 Dante.  
 ff. 1270-1287 Guido delle Colonne.  
 1272-1307 King Edward I  
 1272?-1305 Sir William Wallace.  
 1274 Dominicans at Cambridge.  
 1274 Foundation of Merton College,  
 Oxford.  
 1280-1284 Hugo de Balsham's scho-  
 lars in Cambridge and founda-  
 tion of Peterhouse.  
 1298 Battle of Falkirk...  
 c. 1300-1349? Richard Rolle of Ham-  
 pole.  
 1300-1325 Auchinleck MS.  
 1300?-1352? Laurence Minot.  
 1304-1374 Petrarch.  
 1305-1377 The Popes at Avignon.  
 c. 1307 Peter of Langtoft's *Chronicle*.  
 1307-1327 King Edward II.  
 1313-1375 Boccaccio.  
 1314 Battle of Bannockburn.  
 c. 1320-1395 John Barbour.  
 c. 1320-1384 John Wyclif.  
 1325?-1403 John Gower.  
 1326-1412 John Trevisa.  
 1327-1377 King Edward III.  
 c. 1330 Nicole Bozon.  
 1330-1335 Guillaume de Deguille-  
 ville's *Pilgrimages*.  
 c. 1337-1340? Froissart.  
 1338 *Vows of the Heron*.  
 1340?-1400 Geoffrey Chaucer.  
 c. 1340. *Tale of Gamelyn*.  
 ? 1342-1442 Juliana of Norwich.  
 1349, 1361, 1369 The Black Death.  
 1349? Death of William Ockham.  
 c. 1350 The alliterative revival.  
 c. 1350 Higden's *Polychronicon*.  
 1351 Statute of Labourers.  
 1355 Gray's *Scalacronica*.  
 1360 Death of Richard FitzRalph,  
 abp of Armagh.

- 1362 ff. *Piers Plowman*.  
 1362 Pleadings in law courts to be conducted in English.  
 1363-1364 Parliaments opened by English speeches.  
 1364 Death of Ranulf Higden.  
 c. 1369-c. 1450 Thomas Occleve.  
 c. 1370-c. 1450 John Lydgate.  
 1370-80 Vernon MS.  
 1371 Earliest (French) MS of the *Mandeville travels*.  
 1373-1393 William of Wykeham founds Winchester.  
 1376 Barbour's *Bruce*.  
 c. 1376-1377 Death of Sir How of Eglintoun.  
 1377-1399 King Richard II.  
 1378-1417 The Great Schism.  
 1379-1386 William of Wykeham founds New College, Oxford.  
 1379-1471 Thomas à Kempis.  
 1381 Peasants' revolt: Wat Tyler, John Ball.  
 1382 The 'earthquake' council.  
 c. 1382 Gower's *Vox Clamantis*.  
 c. 1383 Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.  
 c. 1384-1387 Fordun's *Scotichronicon*.  
 c. 1386 Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*.  
 c. 1387 *Canterbury Tales* begun.  
 1387 Trevisa's translation of *Polychronicon*.  
 1388 Execution of Thomas Usk.  
 1388 Otterburn (Percy and Douglas).  
 1390 *Confessio Amantis* first completed.  
 1391-1447 Humphrey duke of Gloucester.  
 1391 Chaucer's *Astrolabe*.  
 1393-1464 John Capgrave.  
 1396 Death of Walter Hylton.  
 1398 Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus.  
 1399-1413 King Henry IV.  
 1401 The statute *De Heretico Comburendo*.  
 1401 Execution of Sawtre.  
 1401-1402 *Jacke Upland*.  
 1403 Stationers' guild incorporated.  
 1405 Archbishop Scrope's revolt.  
 1406 The English capture Prince James (James I of Scotland).  
 1413-1422 King Henry V.  
 1413 St Andrews recognised as a *studium generale*.  
 1414 The Lollard Act.  
 1415 *The Crowned King*.  
 1415 Battle of Agincourt.  
 1415 Council of Constance condemns Wycliffite errors.  
 1417 End of the Great Schism.  
 1417 Execution of Sir John Oldcastle.  
 1418 Peterhouse library catalogued.  
 1422-1471 King Henry VI.  
 c. 1420 Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil*.  
 1421-1466 John Paston, letter-writer.  
 1421-1428-1491 William Caxton.  
 1422 Yonge's translation of *Secreta Secretorum*.  
 c. 1423 *The Kingis Quair*.  
 c. 1425-c. 1500 Robert Henryson.  
 1431 François Villon born.  
 1440-1441 Henry VI founds King's College, Cambridge, and Eton.  
 1442-1479 Sir John Paston, letter-writer.  
 1450-1620 Period of Middle Scots.  
 c. 1450-1482 Richard de Holand.  
 1450 MS of some Robin Hood ballads.  
 1450 Jack Cade's rebellion.  
 1450 Glasgow recognised as a *studium generale*.  
 c. 1450 Printing at Mainz.  
 1453 Constantinople captured by the Turks.  
 1455-1471 Wars of the Roses.  
 c. 1455 *Pecock's Repressor*.  
 1456 Sir Gilbert Hay's translations.  
 c. 1460 Blind Harry's *Wallace*.  
 c. 1460-c. 1520 William Dunbar.  
 1461-1483 King Edward IV.  
 c. 1470 Fortescue's *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*.  
 1474-5-c. 1530 Stephen Hawes.  
 c. 1475-1522 Gavin Douglas.  
 c. 1485 *Reunell of the Histories of Troy*, the first book printed in the English language.  
 1476 Caxton press at Westminster.  
 1477 *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, the first dated book issued in England.  
 c. 1477 Caxton's edition of the *Canterbury Tales*.

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| 1480 The first London press, (John Lettoun's).                            | 1500 King's College, Aberdeen, completed.   |
| 1483 King Edward V.   | 1503 Arnold's <i>Chronicle</i> (in which was first published <i>The Nut Brown Maid</i> ). |
| 1483-1485 King Richard III.   | 1505-1506 Hawes's <i>Passetyme of Pleasure</i> .  |
| 1483 Caxton's <i>Golden Legend</i> .                                      | 1509-1547 King Henry VIII.  |
| 1484 Caxton's <i>Book of the Knight of the Tower</i> .                    | 1510 Dean Colet founds St Paul's school.  |
| 1485 Battle of Bosworth.  | 1511 <i>The Pilgrimage of Sir Richard Guilforde</i> (Guildford's dates are 1455?-1506).   |
| 1485-1509 King Henry VII.   | 1513 Battle of Flodden.   |
| 1485 Sir Thomas Malory's <i>Morte d'Arthur</i> published (finished 1469). | c. 1525 Asloan MS.  |
| 1486-1487 John Mirk's <i>Libet Festivalis</i> published.                  | 1516 Fabyan's <i>Chronicles</i> printed.  |
| 1490 Caxton's <i>Eneydos</i> .  | 1519 Field of the Cloth of Gold.  |
| 1492 Columbus sets sail from Spain and discovers the West India.          | 1523-1525 Berners's translation of Froissart's <i>Chronicle</i> printed.                  |
| 1494 The Venetian press of Aldus begins work.                             | 1532 First collected edition of Chaucer (Thynne's).                                       |
| c. 1495 Wynkyn de Worde's edition of Trevisa's <i>Bartholomaeus</i> .     | 1568 Bannatyne MS.  |
| 1497 Cabot reaches America.   | c. 1650 MS of Percy folio.  |
| 1498 Execution of Savonarola.   | 1765 Percy's <i>Reliques</i> printed.   |
| 1498 Erasmus comes to Oxford.   | 1775 Tyrwhitt's edition of Chaucer.   |

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